Reconfiguring 'Post-'colonial Local Relations through Things, Places, and Bodies in Hong Kong Culture and Society

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ABSTRACT

The thesis explores how Hong Kong's local is varyingly conceived and perceived, and how different local relations are constellated through the representation of thing, place, and bodies in cultural expression such as cinema, literature, and others, and their subsequent circulation in Hong Kong culture and society against different socio-political contexts.

After the reversion of the sovereignty over Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997, several critical moments started to emerge one after another: from the Asian financial breakdown in 2002, the SARS epidemic outbreak in 2003, to the civil disobedience campaign Umbrella Movement in 2014. Embedded within are the deeply sedimented colonial experiences of generations of Hong Kong people and what I call the "hangover" condition caused by the newly gained 'post'-colonial status of the city. In addition to the local crises and changes that took place amidst the handover of sovereignty, post-1997 Hong Kong is faced with a rather challenging situation: the restructuring of a grand narrative through decolonizing efforts of the government, the shrinking border between Hong Kong and China, the contested relationships of the colonial past and the postcolonial present, and the many socio-political conflicts and cultural clashes between the local and the national, whose identities and voices remain ambiguous on many levels.

In light of this, my thesis offers a critical response to the varying emotions and cultural forms that are vented out through artistic expression and aesthetic representation of specific things, places, and bodies that can also be found in the situated reality. These include but are not limited to "Kowloon King" Tsang Tsou-chou and his calligraphy, Sung Wong Toi and the émigré-literati community, Lion Rock and generations of "Hongkongers," the film *Ten Years* and the spectatorships it engendered. By analysing the reciprocity between cultural currency in representation and remediation, and material impacts such as social responses and phenomena, the thesis aims to uncover different local relations from the latent to the manifest level in the changing socio-political landscape of Hong Kong. These reconfigured local relations differ from one another in their forms in terms of the mode of appearance, in their connectivities with Hong Kong's local, and in their affinities with different things, places, and bodies; in return, different *localnesses*, as manifold manifestations of local, are revealed to be constructed through the constellations of different things, places, and bodies, whose agencies are acknowledged in the process of the analysis. By examining the postcolonial condition shared by Hong Kong and all these things, places, and bodies whose agencies were once neglected, the thesis engenders a renewed politics of representation, materiality, and appearance, where alternative "Hong Kongs" and "locals" can be mapped out through different reciprocal relationships made available in the processes of mediation, remediation, and intermediation.

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Hong Kong Stories with Things, Places, and Bodies

> The story seems to get simpler; the story seems to get more complicated. It leads to other stories, breaks off and begins again, begins and falters. The story is getting shorter, flatter. Everyone is telling it—the story of Hong Kong. Everyone is telling a different story.
>
> — Leung Ping-kwan / Yasi[1]

"The Hong Kong Story" is a permanent exhibition installed in the Hong Kong Museum of History, run by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government, since 2001. Established in the post-handover era, the exhibition and the museum compensate, to a certain extent, for the lack of comprehensive coverage of local history in any museum context previously in the city under colonialism.[2] Meanwhile, for two decades after the

[1] Ping-kwan Leung, "The Story of Hong Kong," in *Hong Kong Collage*, trans. Martha Cheung (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3.

[2] When the first city hall was built in Hong Kong in 1869, a public museum was also set up inside the building. However, the history of Hong Kong was never the main theme of the museum. When the city
[2] When the first city hall was built in Hong Kong in 1869, a public museum was also set up inside the building. However, the history of Hong Kong was never the main theme of the museum. When the city hall was demolished in 1947 to give way to high-rise buildings in the area, a new city hall was not built until 1962. With the inauguration of the new city hall almost a century after the first one was built, the City Museum and Gallery of Art was first introduced and was installed inside the complex. In 1975, the City Museum and Gallery of Art was officially divided into two separate bodies, namely the History Museum and the Hong Kong Museum of Art. The History Museum started with an exhibition space of 700 m^2 rented in Star House, a commercial building, in Tsim Sha Tsui, while the storage and other offices were located in Kowloon Park. In 1983, the museum moved to the renovated barracks in Kowloon Park; in 1998, the museum was finally installed in its current site which was considered to be its permanent premise so far. For further reference, see:
Ching-hin Ho, "A Review of the Development of the Hong Kong Museum of History in the Past 30 Years: From a Small Gallery to a Fully Built Museum," *Hong Kong Museum of History*, last modified September 22, 2015, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.history.museum/en_US/web/mh/publications/spa_pspecial_10_01.html.
Emily Stokes-Rees, "Recounting History: Constructing a national narrative in the Hong Kong Museum of History," in *National Museums: New Studies from Around the World*, ed. Arne Bugge Amundsen et al. (London: Routledge, 2011), 342.
Eva Kit-wah Man, "A Museum of Hybridity: The History of the Display of Art in the Public Museum of Hong Kong, and its implications for Cultural Identities," in *Hybrid Hong Kong*, ed. Kwok-bun Chan (London: Routledge, 2014), 138-139.

reversion of the sovereignty over Hong Kong from Britain to China in 1997, the entanglement of past colonial experiences and the newly gained quasi-postcolonial condition, as well as the relation and the contestation of the global, the local, and the national, have showed that the colonial-postcolonial transition in Hong Kong could not be simplistically flattened to the sheer exchange of legal documents, handshakes, and flags, nor the mere change of the government logo, administrative body, and national anthem. The rendering of Hong Kong history into "The Hong Kong Story" in this case precisely offers a point of entry to a picture that is filled with contraries, entanglements, and peculiarities.

The Hong Kong Story, *A* Hong Kong Story

With a fact-based content, "The Hong Kong Story," according to the official museum guide, starts "from the Devonian period 400 million years ago and concludes with the reunification of Hong Kong with China in 1997."[3] In the actual exhibition space, the museum dedicates its first gallery to present a picture of Hong Kong without humans but rocks, plants, and animals, which make up the natural landscape of the territory; the second gallery uses archaeological discoveries to prove human occupancy of the area since prehistoric times; in the third gallery, human activities in Hong Kong are traced through relics and literary documentation, and are ordered according to the timeline of imperial China from the Han to the Qing dynasties; the fourth gallery introduces Hong Kong's folk culture through artefacts and installations; last but not least, the colonial history of Hong Kong with a duration of 155 years is presented in the last three galleries, where iconic historical events, such as the cessions of Hong Kong in three treaties over the course of the 19th century, Japanese occupation during World War II, the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, and the 1997 handover, are recounted. It is no coincidence that the end of British colonialism, the transferral of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China, and the establishment of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), which all came into effect on July 1, 1997, bring narrative closure to the exhibition and an end to the visit.

This superficial 'completion' of "The Hong Kong Story" reminds us of how historical work is defined by Hayden White in his seminal book *Metahistory* as:

[3] Hong Kong Museum of History. *Guide Map* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Museum of History, 2013).

> a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structure and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them.[4]

In the book, White embarks on a formalist investigation of the production of historical consciousness by examining the structure and structural elements of historical works produced in 19th century Europe. Story, according to White, plays a fundamental role in the conceptualization of historical account where events are first arranged in chronicle and then organized into a story with discernible beginning and ending. While chronicle, like series of running time, is open-ended, the function of story in historical work is based on the fundamental nature of storytelling and story itself as a narrative form, i.e. to assign significances, to determine the motifs, and to give a clear starting point and an end to a set of events.[5] The selected timespan that is covered by "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition thereby provides an interesting point of inquiry: not only is the year 1997—as the terminal point of this narrative presented as Hong Kong's history—suspended by a time-space frozen in and by the museum context; as of 2016, there is also a 20-year gap between *the* Hong Kong storied in the museum and the changing situated present(s) of the city taking place and evolving right outside the exhibition venue.[6] When the city's complexity and its dwellers' perplexity of the past 20 years are left in the shadows unattended, the assertive tone embedded in this historical narrative and the harmonious 'conclusion' bestowed onto this Hong Kong story are consequently brought into question. In all these instances, "The Hong Kong Story" plays different roles as a 'functional' space (a government-run museum body as its exhibition venue), as a 'model' story (the use of the definite article "the" in its title), and as a 'mediated' event offered to any visitors of the exhibition (with a pedagogical effects on the locals as well as tourists).

To this end, a critical analysis of Hong Kong historiography offers a hand to

[4] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973), 2.
[5] Ibid., 5-7.
[6] The permanent exhibition of the museum, "The Hong Kong Story," is closed for renovation since the second half of 2016. How this story of Hong Kong will be narrated by the museum opens up room for further investigation. Nevertheless, "The Hong Kong Story" I scrutinized here, which had been run by the museum for 15 years, offers a crucial vantage point to explore different forces that are at work in shaping "Hong Kong" in the post-1997 era.

destabilize the sense of comprehensiveness and the voice of the authority that are imparted to this officially promoted narrative of Hong Kong history and are simultaneously disseminated by "The Hong Kong Story." With regard to the way Hong Kong's history is organized and narrated, mindful historians with a postcolonial consciousness delineate two main aspects of critiques: On the one hand, there are what Christopher Munn calls the "colonial school,"[7] and what Tsai Jung-fang calls the "colonialist historical scholarship"[8]—both referring to an elitist and Eurocentric treatment of Hong Kong's history, where different forms of domination and expansion stemming from imperialism are justified by means of civilization and modernization; on the other hand, the "patriotic historical scholarship"[9] and the "Marxist, nationalist historical school based in Beijing"[10] are also respectively criticized by Munn and Tsai as the other side of the same coin. In the latter case, although the Chinese community is no longer omitted like in the colonial school, the presence and the activities of the Chinese population in Hong Kong, according to Munn's and Tsai's examination of these narratives, are frequently associated with patriotic sentiments and nationalistic calls for "China."[11] Saturated with the state ideology upheld by the People's Republic of China (PRC) which endorses these China-centric narratives, this school tends to contextualize Hong Kong history under the historical scope of continental China, with an aim to justify the Chinese Communist Party's claim of Hong Kong's sovereignty after 1997: for instance, by reinstating China's ownership of Hong Kong and by suggesting how Hong Kong 'belongs' to China since time 'immemorial.' In addition to this, this school has a tendency to read any anti-colonial campaigns organized by the local population as a proof of patriotism to China: for example, by automatically associating the discontent towards the British colonial government to the expression of patriotic sentiments towards China, and by drawing over-simplistic parallelisms between Hong Kong people and people in China, who are believed by these narratives to have shared the

[7] Christopher Munn, *Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001), 4-7.
[8] Jung-fang Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social unrest in the British Colony, 1842-1913* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 6.
[9] Munn, 7-8.
[10] Jung-fang Tsai 蔡榮芳, *Xianggangren zhi Xianggangshi 1841–1945* 香港人之香港史 1841-1945 [The Hong Kong People's History of Hong Kong 1841-1945] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2001), 7.
[11] Ibid.

same goal to resist capitalism and imperialism over the course of Hong Kong's colonial history.[12] With an eye to the indifference towards the will and the perspective of Hong Kong people that governs these narratives, Tsai reiterates the invalidity of this mode of thinking which is built on overgeneralized readings and highly biased arguments of Hong Kong's locals.[13]

To examine "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition with these concerns in mind, a Hong Kong's perspective, in fact, conjures up one of the most important pieces that have gone missing in this jigsaw puzzle. With regard to the way the handover is recounted, the exhibition's take in rendering the event into a eulogy of 'reunification'—when it can otherwise be described neutrally and more objectively as the *reversion* or the *transferral* of Hong Kong's sovereignty from Britain to China—conveys an overtone of determinism with a strong hint of a national glory that sides with "China" that is—quite automatically, but not without a problem—understood to be the People's Republic of China, a political regime established by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since 1949. Moreover, the triumphant atmosphere created by descriptive words such as "reunification," "reunion," and "return" poses a huge contrast to the general fear towards 1997 that was experienced by Hong Kong people, which could be observed in the outflow of the local population in several migration waves and in cultural expressions produced during the 1980s and the 1990s. In addition to this moment of ambivalence, key events that are identified by historian John M. Carroll as important determining moments of Hong Kong history in his oft-quoted book *A Concise History of Hong Kong* are, to one's surprise, not recounted in the exhibition. For instance, visitors are not informed of China's request of removing Hong Kong and Macau from the list of colonial territories made to the United Nation in 1972. As a result, Hong Kong—with its status switched from a "Crown Colony" to a "Dependent Territory"—was deprived of a chance of entering a genuine phase of decolonization like other former colonies such as India and Singapore did;[14] meanwhile, neither are visitors informed of the formation of the post-handover political landscape, which was a result of China's rejection of the constitutional

[12] Tsai, *The Hong Kong People's History of Hong Kong*, 6-7.
[13] Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, 14.
[14] John M. Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2007), 176.

reform plan that was passed in Hong Kong by the Legislative Council in 1994 and that would have allowed the territory to undergo processes of democratization: in reality, the Chinese Communist Party condemned the British government for introducing democratization plans; the Legislative Council of Hong Kong, which was formed by a direct election in 1995 was declared illegal by China and was immediately dissolved on the day after the handover was officiated; to replace the pro-democrats who had become the majority of the Legislative Council since 1995, China installed a new council comprising mostly of pro-Establishment politicians who were voted out by electorates in the previous election but were handpicked by Beijing to re-enter the post-1997 political arena of Hong Kong.[15] The non-representation of these important events thereby exposes a negative space of "The Hong Kong Story" narrated in the exhibition where certain voices are noticeably muted. Not exclusive to "The Hong Kong Story" alone, John Carroll's critical review of the city's history as an academic output is also subject to a similar form of non-representation in postmillennial Hong Kong: in one Chinese-translated version of *A Concise History of Hong Kong* released by Chung Hwa Publisher in 2013, criticisms against the Communist government of China—wherein Carroll traces events that show how Beijing is, relatively speaking, more authoritarian than the British colonial government, and how the local population indeed favoured the latter more than the former[16]—are removed without the author's consent.[17] With reference to the historiography of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, once a British colony, is not new to power hierarchies and inequalities (cf. what is [not] said by the colonizer and what is [not] accounted by the "colonial school"[18]); however, with the subsiding of British colonizing power and the local population's anticipation of a postcolonial reordering upon the arrival of 1997, non-representation and the uneven distribution of forces, which can be evidently observed in "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition and the abovementioned Chinese-translated edition of Carroll's *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, not only become highly visible in the city, but also persist as real problems that

[15] Ibid., 198-203.
[16] Ibid., 7, 213.
[17] "Zhonghua Shuju cuangai *Xianggang Jianshi*" 中華書局篡改《香港簡史》[Chung Hwa Publisher distorts *A Concise History of Hong Kong*], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, July 20, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20130720/18341476.
[18] For more details, see the criticisms towards the "colonial school" made by historians John Carroll, Christopher Munn, and Tsai Jung-fang.

disturb many who have acquired different degrees of local consciousness and political awareness.

What has been discussed so far can be epitomized by the tug of war between the use of the definite article "the" and the indefinite article "a" in describing "__ Hong Kong story." By the convention of Chinese as a written language, the plural form cannot be simply conveyed by the bare noun "*gushi*" 故事 (story) alone, unless stated or upon further elaboration. In the officially approved bilingual description provided by Hong Kong Museum of History, one can read accurately the intended, if not emphasized, choice of the singular. Made explicit in the English title of the exhibition, the use of the definite article indicates an intention to totalize *the* Hong Kong story and history recounted by the museum as the one and only accountable version; whereas in the respective scholarship and readership of Hong Kong histories and stories contributed by the aforementioned scholars like Leung Ping-kwan and John Carroll, and cultural workers like Sai Sai who will be introduced in the following, manifold perspectives and alternative voices are promoted to resist oneness and oppression. In these moments, a postcolonial consciousness in defence of plurality and openness is indeed found propagating on different levels and expressed even under the British colonial rule of Hong Kong (e.g. Sai Sai).

Many a Histories, Many a Stories

The travelling of words between languages is an interesting point of reflection, wherein the ambiguity and, paradoxically, the potentiality of meanings bring about different perspectives and implications: With a choice between the singular and the plural, the discussion of "__ Hong Kong story/stories" is, on the surface, veiled by a sense of linguistic uncertainty, and reflects an untranslatable dimension in the signification process that takes place not only between different languages (namely English and Chinese in this case), but within the Chinese language itself. This moment of ambiguity and indeterminacy is, meanwhile, counteracted by a potential way of repositioning history and story through the injection of plurality, as it is illustrated by Sai Sai 西西 (1938-), a highly acclaimed Hong Kong writer who is famous for her out-of-the-box thinking, in her works.

In a compilation of short stories titled *Gushi li de gushi* 故事裡的故事 (Story

Within Story), Sai Sai reinvents historical events and re-characterises historical figures by creatively adapting them into her own creative stories which can be regarded as her own (re)interpretation of history. In the processes of writing and reading these stories, the playful problematization of history and story certainly brings about a sense of ambiguity. Meanwhile, by transgressing the boundaries between history and story, the writers and the readers actually come to rewrite story into histories and remake history into stories. In other words, the dual acts of writing and reading and the interchangeable roles of the writer and the reader result in a dynamics of constant recreation and reinterpretation of histories and stories—this approach is frequently employed and experienced in Sai Sai's corpus, wherein history and story are demonstrated to be two sides of the same coin.[19] As Sai Sai reiterates, it is through stories that one can reinvent history, and it is through histories where we come to say "hi" to story as "hi story."[20]

"The Hong Kong Story" exhibition run by the Hong Kong Museum of History, however, reveals that the blurry line between history and story is indeed a sword with two blades. To this end, Hong Kong history told in mimicry of a story by the Hong Kong Museum of History demonstrates how interpretation in general is governed by the mode of narrative involved and the generic convention of reading and writing. For instance, Noël Carroll identifies a "phenomenological feeling of finality" towards narrative that is shared by readers in general[21]—the illusory 'completion' of *the* Hong Kong story in 1997 proposed by the exhibition thereby satisfies the yearning for narrative closure; the habitual installation and expectation of an equilibrium state at the end of a story is an observation made by Tzvetan Todorov concerning the construction of a generic narrative structure[22]—the transferral of sovereignty over Hong Kong from Britain to China, which is shaped by the exhibition

[19] Sai Sai repeatedly demonstrates in her works different ways and perspectives to reimagine Hong Kong history and rewrite Hong Kong stories. These tendencies are shown, for instance, in her novellas "Fei Tu Zhen de gushi" 肥土鎮的故事 [The Story of Fertile Town] (1982), "Fucheng zhiyi" 浮城誌異 [Marvels of a Floating City] (1986), and "Fei Tu Zhen Huilan ji" 肥土鎮灰闌記 [The Fertile Town Chalk Circle] (1986), and her novels *Wocheng* 我城 [My City] (1979), and *Feizhan* 飛氈 [Flying Carpet] (1996).

[20] Sai Sai 西西, *Gushi li de gushi* 故事裏的故事 [Story Within Story] (Taipei: Hong fan shu dian 洪範書店, 1998), 3.

[21] Noël Carroll, "Narrative Closure," *Philosophical Studies* 135, no. 1 (August 2007): 1, 4-5, accessed October 10, 2016, doi: 10.1007/s11098-007-9097-9.

[22] Tzvetan Todorov, "Structural Analysis of Narrative," trans. Arnold Weinstein, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1969): 75-76, accessed October 10, 2016, doi: 10.2307/1345003.

as a "reunification," thereby conveys a harmonious moment that is finally attained by the story of Hong Kong. In this regard, presenting history by means of narrative structure as such and the resultant readings engendered by default can easily lead to the oversimplification of internal conflicts and the concealment of unequal power relations in the social reality, hence hindering any critical and reflective readings from emerging.

In addition to the illusion of harmony and finality that is dispersed by the narrative underlining of "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition, rendering the development of Hong Kong and its society into a story of progress, success, and miracle is another parallel operation that encourages only simplistic, conflictless readings to be at work. This mode of storytelling is deeply embedded in the historical work produced by the colonizer, wherein it is repeatedly emphasized that Hong Kong was built up from scratches (the famous imagery of "barren rock") upon its cession to Britain, with an underlying purpose to justify domination and expansion stemmed from imperialism and colonization.[23] Over the course of Hong Kong's history under colonialism, such portrayal of the city with a focus on development and modernization has been deeply rooted in its grand narrative—which is not only observable in the historiography of Hong Kong, but is also consolidated by cultural means. Upon the arrival of 1997, Leung Ping-kwan identifies two principle ways of portraying Hong Kong in literature, namely the story of stability and prosperity brought about by colonialism, and the nationalistic story that connects Hong Kong to China.[24] It is under this circumstance that Leung puts forth the story of Hong Kong as "a story that is hard to tell."[25]

Since then, Leung's contemplative line is frequently quoted by many, applied in different contexts and at times adapted to fit for different rhetorical purposes. On the verge of becoming a cliché, the story of Hong Kong as "a story that is hard to tell" is apparently still valid in postmillennial Hong Kong—not only that, the line is recalled by equally established scholars in the field of Hong Kong studies (which will

[23] Munn, 4-7; Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History,* 6.
[24] Leung, "The Story of Hong Kong," 7-10.
[25] Ping-kwan Leung 梁秉鈞, "Xianggang de gushi: weishenme zheme nanshuo?" 香港的故事：為甚麼這麼難說？ [The Story of Hong Kong: Why is it so hard to tell?], in *Hong Kong Literature as/and Cultural Studies* 香港文學@文化研究, ed. Esther M.K. Cheung, and Yiu-wai Chu (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2002), 11.

be discussed in the following session); what makes the story of Hong Kong even more problematic is that the two strands of narrative pinpointed by Leung become increasingly intertwined and highly entangled in the post-1997 era. This is, for instance, evident in narratives that glorify the development of Hong Kong as a 'growth' of a "barren rock" to an international city of prosperity and stability. It is identified by Law Wing-sang in *Collaborative Colonial Power* that this "liberal modernist" framework is a common narrative structure shared by both Britain- and PRC-led narratives before and after 1997, despite the apparent political and ideological differences between the colonizer's Euro-/Western-centric mind-set and PRC's party-oriented perspective.[26] In other words, appropriating Hong Kong's history into a story of (economic) success over the course of its development is not a unique gesture of the British colonizer as a political power as well as a historian's view, but is also continuously and openly employed by the establishment in effect upon the transferral of Hong Kong's sovereignty in 1997. Under this framework, social problems, social inequality and exploitation faced by the local population, during colonialism or after, are tolerated and flattened to give way to the 'success' of the city. This feature that continues to propagate in the grand narrative at work after the colonial-postcolonial transition of Hong Kong reveals the seamless connection between the two presumably different, but potentially similar settings of Hong Kong before and after 1997. In both scenarios, there is a clear goal of smoothing up contested political changes and decisions that are imposed on Hong Kong by a top-down manner. The purpose of highlighting the 'success' of Hong Kong as a highly developed and modernised city is thereby in line with the illusion of 'completion' and the make-belief 'happy ending' injected to "The Hong Kong Story" presented by the Hong Kong Museum of History. The underlying forces at work in adopting perspective as such into the grand narrative indicate the persistence of an unequal power, which, at some points, becomes visible as a voice that is louder than others in telling its story of Hong Kong, and has never subsided in spite of the apparent colonial-postcolonial change.

The discussion partaken so far in this chapter reveals how contested Hong

[26] Wing-sang Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power: the Making of the Hong Kong Chinese* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 4.

Kong stories and histories are, by way of how matters are shaped, meanings are produced, and narratives are interpreted: Sai Sai demonstrates how the attitude of "hi story" opens up new possibilities of understanding and representing Hong Kong, where every reader is encouraged to have one's own interpretation, inasmuch as any reader is also a writer of Hong Kong histories and stories; whereas "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition—contrary to Sai Sai's emphasis on differences and plurality—represents a monotonous voice that insists in telling *the* history of Hong Kong as *the* Hong Kong story (and vice versa). In this double-edged sword, the choice of the linguistic blade depends on the use of the singular or the plural form in describing the story and the history of Hong Kong, and, on a deeper level, the willingness to accept different voices and perspectives, or the insistence of sameness and homogeneity in processes of representation and interpretation. To illustrate this, Hong Kong stories and histories can be envisioned as a contested site *per se* where different ways of seeing and reading unavoidably cross path with one another, and hence different (power) relations at work are exposed.

Having devoted his lifelong career to the enrichment of Hong Kong literature as a writer and the study of Hong Kong culture as a scholar, Leung Ping-kwan's statement precisely brings to light different changing loci of contestation, interrogation, and negotiation which are in flux in a matrix filled with different things, places, and bodies that are present in the environment of Hong Kong and, to different extent, conceive Hong Kong in representation, utterance, and others. My primary aim to invoke Leung's contemplation regarding the story of Hong Kong is to highlight, with the assistance of Sai Sai, the generative power of storytelling where the potentialities of rewriting, rereading, and recreating are observed; and, with the example of "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition, the lesser-discussed degenerative power of the strategic act of storytelling where homogenous, generic readings with anticipated results are encouraged in order for political agendas and motifs to be fulfilled. This renewed look at Leung's oft-quoted line and its adaptations (that I will delineate in the following) reminds us of the potential backlashes formed as a result of reinterpretation and remediation: Be it the generative or the degenerative power at work, the resultant readings can be totally disconnected from the original motifs and intents, and can thereafter change the course of events and their interpretations over

different times and across different spaces.[27] With all these in mind, Hong Kong stories can then be given a new look.

Hong Kong Stories Redux

Following Leung Ping-kwan, the story of Hong Kong as "a story that is hard to tell" has been acknowledged by many, inasmuch as many Hong Kong stories are continuously told against different contexts over different times. In the eventful year of 1997, sociologist Tai-lok Lui published a semi-academic, semi-personal account of his own Hong Kong story, where he recounts the motif of keeping a testimony as such:

> Counting down to 1997, we have come across many different Hong Kong stories. In face of those that we cannot agree with, the best way is to join in writing more Hong Kong stories, such that there is more than one way in telling the story of Hong Kong. After all, it is not about telling the most popular story—the most important thing of all is that everybody has a chance to tell his/her stories.[28] (my translation)

In his explication, Lui not only reinstates a plural form to "Hong Kong stories," but also demonstrates in different essays compiled in the same book the possibility to tell a personal Hong Kong story according to his own experience and subjectivity as a

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[27] The operation of remediation is comprehensively discussed by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin in their thought-provoking book *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. In response to the digital age, they explore intermediacy and hence the potentiality of remediation between reality, cinema, the internet, virtual reality, and others. By highlighting the "transparent presentation of the real" and the "enjoyment of the opacity of media" as the "twin preoccupations of contemporary media," Bolter and Grusin look at how new media constantly refashions old media through remediation, where the ways of seeing and perspectives offered by painting, photography, film, and television are given a new look (21).
Jay David Bolter, and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge; London: MIT Press, 2000).

[28] The original text is: 在九七倒數的日子裏，我們聽到很多不同版本的香港故事：聽不順耳、看不順眼的不少。面對這樣的局面，我們覺得回應的方法只有一套——就是參與編寫不同的香港故事。只有這樣做，才可以凸顯香港故事並非只有一套說法。究竟哪一套最為受落？這不是最重要的問題：更重要的是：人人講故，人人駁故。
Tai-lok Lui 呂大樂, "Xianggang gushi bu yi jiang" 香港故事不易講 [Hong Kong story is hard to tell], in *Youluo, houshu! Xianggang shinian, yi ge shehui xuejia de biji* 唔該, 埋單: 一個社會學家的香港筆記 [Check, Please! A Sociologist's Notes on Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Pause Company 閒人行有限公司, 1997), 20.

Hongkonger—which is based on neither the point of view lain down by the British colonial government nor the state ideology injected by the political regime of China. In this regard, the Hong Kong subjectivity inscribed in Lui's writings comes with an equally strong sense of situatedness which is simultaneously time-specific (1997) and space-specific (Hong Kong), particular (a personal reflection) and general (the person as a member of Hong Kong society at large).

In a new edition of the book that was published ten years later in 2007, Lui rekindles a moment of reflection in a follow-up essay that addresses the postcolonial experience of his contemporaries in Hong Kong:

> Before 1997, the story of Hong Kong is hard to tell; after 1997, we don't have a clue to recount what had happened and what is happening [in the story of Hong Kong].[29] (my translation)

According to Lui, the passage from 1997 to 2007 marks a decade of change: from the 1997 handover to the epidemic outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003; and from the Hong Kong SAR government's attempt to pass the controversial anti-subservience law in 2003 to Beijing's increasing influence to Hong Kong's affairs over the years. All these happenings in post-handover Hong Kong leave Lui in a state of speechlessness. Reflecting on his personal experience and extending it to the society, Lui attributes the general numbness of Hong Kong people to the surroundings to their inability to break away from a deep-rooted mentality that takes the shape of faint hope to maintain the so-called status quo of Hong Kong since the 1980s. In view of the corruption of professional integrity, the erosion of social and political order, and the imminent threat to political rights and freedom of speech in the city after 1997, Lui sees the pressing need to reflect on the past, confront the present, and ultimately take a firmer grip on Hong Kong's future, especially when the policy of "50 years of unchange" will be expired in 2047. By rewriting and backreading different Hong Kong stories, Lui proposes to re-examine what had been left (out) unattended in the 1980s and the 1990s, to enhance the understanding of Hong Kong

[29] The original text is: 九七前，香港故事不易講。九七之後，千頭萬緒，不知從何說起。
Tai-lok Lui 呂大樂, "Youluo, houshu! Xianggang shinian, yi ge shehui xuejia de biji" 有落，後數！香港十年，一個社會學家的筆記 [Check Please! A Sociologist's Note on a decade of Hong Kong], *Apple Daily*, July 22, 2007, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20070722/7352357.

identity and culture, and to stop clinging onto the illusion of 'unchange,' i.e. the maintenance of the status quo. With this in mind, Lui makes another attempt in *Hong Kong Model* (2015) and demonstrates how understanding the story of Hong Kong in the past—by tracing the development of the social model of Hong Kong from the 1960s and onward in this case—can be a tactics to gain insights on both the personal and the collective level, in order to react to the difficult situation faced by Hong Kong people at the present moment.[30]

The awareness of the presence of a current impasse and the urgent need to deal with it are not only expressed by Lui in the field of sociology, but also in cultural studies by scholars like Chu Yiu-wai, Chan Ching-kiu, and others.[31] With a similar hope to reinstate the momentum of Hong Kong studies through the essay compilation *Hong Kong Studies as a Method* (2016), Chu invokes Leung's oft-quoted contemplation abovementioned and Lui's justification of the persisting difficulty in telling the story of Hong Kong after 1997.[32] In the post-handover, postmillennial landscape of Hong Kong, Chu attributes the wearying state of Hong Kong studies in the academic field to the problem of marginalization—a condition which is faced not only by Hong Kong studies alone, but Hong Kong society at large. In face of global modernity and the ever-growing China factor, Chu cannot help but ask in chorus with Leung and Lui: Where is the story of Hong Kong heading to? And how to carry on telling Hong Kong stories?

Stories that are Hard to Tell

With reference to the critical assessment of Hong Kong historiography and the examination of the story of Hong Kong as a narrative recycled over the course of

[30] Tai-lok Lui 呂大樂, *Xianggang moshi: Cong xianzaishi dao guoqushi* 香港模式：從現在式到過去式 [Hong Kong Model: From the Present to the Past] (Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Publisher, 2015), 17, 196-197.

[31] Chan Ching-kiu delivers his open message "delay no more" in his inaugurating article "Delay no more: struggles to re-imagine Hong Kong (for the next 30 years)" for the special issue "Hong Kong at a crossroads" published by the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. After analysing the critical conditions Hong Kong is facing, and its people will continue to face for the next 30 years ("a complex series of cultural-political struggles to re-imagine the future"), Chan asks his readers "to slow down (and think, un-think; imagine, un-imagine) as you walk along that highway to work next morning on the next routine. But delay no more..." (345-346).
See, Stephen Ching-kiu Chan, "Delay no more: struggles to re-imagine Hong Kong (for the next 30 years)," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16 no. 3 (2015): 327-347, doi: 10.1080/14649373.2015.1070447.

[32] Yiu-wai Chu 朱耀偉, ed. *Xianggang (yanjiu) zuowei fangfa* 香港(研究)作為方法 [Hong Kong Studies as a Method]. (Hong Kong: Chung Hwa Publisher, 2016), 12, 15.

Hong Kong's history that are delineated earlier in this chapter, it is revealed that how 'Hong Kong' is perceived and conceived across different contexts is closely connected to how 'Hong Kong' is represented in historical and fictional narratives. To use this double-edged sword justly, Sai Sai's creative approach is accounted for opening up a dimension wherein the relations between histories, stories and the respective worlds they create become permeable, and hence Hong Kong stories and histories can be reread, backread, and rewritten through the generative power of cultural production and consumption. This shift of paradigms is precisely addressed by Munn in his theorization of a "Hong Kong school" of reading:

> this school takes Hong Kong and its people, rather than colonial government or the diplomatic relationships between China and British, as its central subject of study. It addresses the social dynamics within Hong Kong, introduced question of race, class and gender differences, and studies patterns of organization that do not fit easily into traditional colonial structures.[33]

The need to establish Hong Kong's own subjectivities and voices in propagating Hong Kong stories in a plural form echoes Lui's and Chu's respective calls in social studies and cultural studies. What is equally important is the plural form repeatedly amplified in these calls—as Chu makes it very clear in delineating Hong Kong studies as a method, the distinction between the attention to local subjects and parochialism precisely lies on the concern of plurality and the willingness to express hybridity in the former.[34] In other words, Hong Kong stories in a plural form encompass a pool of voices and perspectives that co-exist with one another, despite their differences and even contrasting stances. To this end, the resistance against the hegemonic claim of Hong Kong history and story as the totalizing one—underscored by the mentalities and the aforementioned ways of reading—embodies a postcolonial turn which urges one to rethink and re-examine critically not only the colonial experiences sedimented from the past centuries, but also the growing presence of China at a time when the

[33] Munn, 9.
[34] Chu, *Hong Kong Studies as Method*, 22-23.

conventional colonial power (Britain as the "official") subsides and alternative forms of unseen power begin to rise.

Law Wing-sang precisely offers an intelligent response to this quasi-postcolonial picture of post-1997 Hong Kong in the book *Collaborative Colonial Power*. By tracing different forces and relations that played a role in promoting and propagating British colonial administration in Hong Kong, Law probes into the transformation of colonialism in different forms over the course of Hong Kong's history, where the colonial power in Hong Kong can be regarded as the collaborative efforts of different powers and interest groups from the British government and the local population. At the end of his investigation, Law addresses the peculiar condition faced by Hong Kong in the postmillennial era, where a genuine postcolonial condition did not emerge with the arrival of 1997. Under this circumstance, Law asks,

> [w]ithout probing further into how our cultural imaginations work spatially — i.e. how we conceive the global, the national, and the local, and how our social and political relations are constituted by these imaginations as well as forces of space wouldn't it be too hasty to call our colonialism 'post-'?[35]

According to Law, the complicated spatial politics at work in present Hong Kong have exceeded any conventional understanding of colonialism, provided that Law had already outlined a highly entangled picture of how the (collaborative) colonial power operates in Hong Kong.[36]

With questions being continuously raised after 1997, the apparent colonial-postcolonial transition is therefore not a finishing line where equilibrium is installed and problems (of colonialism?) are resolved—as it is implied in the officially promoted "The Hong Kong Story." On the contrary, the newly gained 'post'-colonial condition of post-1997 Hong Kong, against which different stories of Hong Kong are produced and consumed, is constantly being challenged. Under this circumstance, the story of Hong Kong becomes destabilized into Hong Kong stories in a plural form, where contrasting stances and contradictory voices that conjure up varying

[35] Ibid., 197.
[36] Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power.,* 196.

appearances and representations of Hong Kong are in flux—I see this as an end to what I call the "hangover" of Hong Kong in the following.

Postmillennial Hong Kong: From Handover to Hangover

The year 1997 notably marks the reversion of the sovereignty over Hong Kong from Britain to the People's Republic of China: On paper, Hong Kong, no longer a British colony, is renamed as "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" ("HKSAR"). In this postcolonial landscape charged with the presence of China as the "motherland," the relationship between Hong Kong and China is constantly re-staged and repositioned. From the signing of "The Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" ("CEPA") and the introduction of "The Individual Visit Scheme" in 2003, to the initiation of high-budget, high-profile cross-border infrastructure projects such as the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge Link in 2009 and the express rail-link in 2011, the border between Hong Kong and China is subsequently reshaped economically as well as politically. Meanwhile, this brings questions to China's role in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's self-positioning and the direction where Hong Kong is heading to, although the Hong Kong-China relationship—according to the Basic Law, a constitution that is in effect in Hong Kong after 1997—is supposed to be built on the "one country, two systems" policy and the promise that Hong Kong would remain unchanged for 50 years.

After the 'banquet' of the handover and upon the dawn of a quasi-postcolonial age, Hong Kong people begin to oscillate, to various extents, between a state of drunkenness and a subsequent state of hangover. Generally speaking, hangover is an aftermath to drunkenness which is caused by the overconsumption of alcohol; likewise, the drunken state of Hong Kong is caused by an overdose of illusions fed to the city and its population upon the colonial-postcolonial transition in 1997. These include, but are not limited to, the rosy picture promoted through the benefits of opening border and market, and of speeding up (if not, delimiting) cross-border exchanges of goods, people, and capital between Hong Kong and China; narratives endorsed by government policies, speeches of government officials, as well as particular media channels in Hong Kong and in China that stress on the ideals of

harmony, oneness, and unification in conceiving and perceiving Hong Kong-China relation (cf. "The Hong Kong Story" exhibition); and, in no simple coincidence, the strategic emphasis of Hong Kong's connection to China through historical, cultural, social, and geographical linkages—such as the incorporation of Hong Kong's precolonial history to Chinese history, the government's attempts to implement CCP-centred "national education" in school curriculum, and the persuasion of the importance of China's natural resources (water and food) in Hong Kong. This Hong Kong story promoted by the grand narrative in circulation after 1997 not only raises questions among the academics (as it is shown earlier), but is also circumscribed by the mixed opinions and feelings of the local population. The quasi-postcolonial dimension of the city is thus revealed, where the feeling of drunkenness that once managed to gloss over differences and disagreements slowly subsides. Subsequently, meanings, sentiments, values, networks, and powers—old and new—collide with one another across different spheres and generate different degrees of contacts from expulsion to amalgamation. As all these entities in the city and their relations to one another are yet clearly distinguished and fully refurbished, Hong Kong, its population and its culture are situated in a chaotic and volatile state of hangover.

When ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion are gradually evaporated away, the hangover state is intersected with different potential moments of awakening where sedimented sentiments are expressed in multiple voices. In one observable dimension of post-1997 Hong Kong, postcoloniality is manifested in form of growing discontent and frustration of the population, where the illusion of harmony, linear progress and oneness is challenged by the eruption of differences and polarities—all these instances can be noted in protests of different scales (the annual July 1st Rally and others), community-based social activist movements (Central Star Ferry Preservation campaign in 2006, Queen's Pier Preservation Campaign in 2007, anti-Express Rail-links campaign in 2009/2010, and the anti-National Education campaign in 2012 etc.), and territory-wide civil disobedience campaign (Umbrella Movement in 2014). Among all these potentially conflicting sentiments that emerge in the post-1997 landscape, the 2014 Umbrella Movement can be considered as a mirror that reflects a matrix of entangled relations and unequal forces. Demanding equal election and political rights and the implementation of an electorate system based on universal

suffrage and genuine democracy, supporters of the movement wish to claim their voices in the political picture of Hong Kong that is dominated by the Beijing-backed establishment. Slogans like "take back the city" and "safeguard *my* city" that were often spotted in the occupy zones precisely demonstrate the presence of a post-1997 Hong Kong subjectivity which is built on the aspiration for freedom and democracy; whereas opposers to the movement, which include the government, condemned the civil disobedience campaign of posing adversary effects to the (economic) growth of the city, or in other words, of disturbing the Hong Kong story of progress that is governed by the liberal modernist way of thinking since colonial times. With the great divide between pro-democracy "yellow ribboners" (supporters of the movement) and pro-establishment "blue ribboners" (opposers of the movement), the Umbrella Movement exposes a social reality of post-1997 Hong Kong where the explosion of different voices and subjectivities is faced with a distress to find a common ground to contain all these contrasting opinions, not to mention to reach for a consensus. As the social cleavage can no longer be covered up by the illusions fed to the city, disillusionment becomes one prime cause as well as perceivable effect that calls an end to the oscillation between a drunken state and a hangover state.

A Moment of Reflection: Situatedness

In postmillennial Hong Kong, the once widely circulated Hong Kong story which is promoted and disseminated by the grand narrative faces great resistance from many a voices that conjure up the *petites histoires* of the city and its population. It is under this circumstance that a Hong Kong subjectivity, which dedicates to safeguarding what is deemed distinctive to the city (e.g. cultural memories, cultural identities, sites and things that are bestowed with collective memories), and defending what defines the city (e.g. core values, distinctive local culture, local language), arises and is transmitted in form of responsibilities and senses of belonging to the city—preservation campaigns and civil disobedience campaign that took place in post-1997 Hong Kong are precisely manifestations of such postcoloniality formed under the contested postcolonial condition of the city.

Meanwhile, the hope to find a way out of the impasse faced by the city—which is delivered in Chu Yiu-wai's endeavour to explore "Hong Kong studies as a

method" and Lui Tai-lok's call for reviewing the past and the present of the city—is incentive for new strata as well as praxis in dealing with different Hong Kong stories told and untold. In the scope of politics and policy-making, political scientist Brian Fong in the edited volume *On Reforming Hong Kong* (2015) urges for a third imaginary of Hong Kong's future. A similar aspiration can also be observed on the everyday level: an issue of *City Magazine* published in January 2015 explores "Hong Kong's ten futures" as a topic of its coverage story. These ten futures are presented by ten stories of different people and groups who are experimenting unconventional ways of living in Hong Kong as well as living up their aspirations (that are not conformed with the [neo]liberal modernist model). The internationally acclaimed choreographer Christopher Doyle provides one of these examples, as he insists in staying in the city to help young filmmakers to tell their own stories through local film productions and with the help of crowd-funding; other examples include urban dwellers who start anew a farming life in the countryside, as an alternative to planting their roots and letting them grow in the territory; and "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung, an iconic activist and atypical lawmaker, who recounts his views on political struggle in the era of resistance in Hong Kong.[37]

In this regard, Hong Kong subjectivities are not only described but are inscribed in all these acts to reposition and reorder the fuzzy visions that are caused by previous drunkenness and the hangover state. Self-reflexivity and situatedness embodied in these perspectives in various degrees is, somehow, in parallel with the act of participant-observation—usually employed in anthropology and sociology, it describes how "the researcher takes part in the activities of a group or community being studied."[38] Therefore, the dimension of local mentioned by Law Wing-sang earlier offers an important point of departure for the investigation to take place in this thesis. With an eye to all of the above mentioned, there is an urgent need to connect cultural representations produced and related interpretations to a critical examination of those Hong Kong stories that have gained currency in the situated present. With its text-based, analytical approach drawing on practices of cultural, cinema, and literary

[37] "Xianggang de shizhong weilai" 香港的十種未來 [Hong Kong's Ten Futures], *City Magazine* 號外 Issue 460, January 2015, 56-96.

[38] "Participant observation," Oxford Reference, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100308390.

studies, my thesis is a critical academic response to the varying emotions and cultural forms that are vented out through artistic expression and aesthetic representation in Hong Kong after 1997, with the broader postcolonial condition of the contemporary world as a wider backdrop. Produced under this circumstance, my thesis offers planes of discussion and interaction for entangled mentalities and complex sensibilities which are previously unidentified to (re)appear and to be (re)connected with one another in processes of remediation and reinterpretation. In order to achieve this, I seek to decipher how different representations of things, places, and bodies come to constitute these Hong Kong stories produced and/or circulated in the postmillennial, quasi-postcolonial era. The following theoretical framework explains how this research embarks on a road less travelled.

A Postcolonial Landscape with Things, Places, and Bodies

To unsettle the established paradigms and to offer alternative perspectives on current matters, I set to explore things, places, and bodies, and their representations that are present but usually neglected in Hong Kong stories. Like how the colonized are silenced by the colonizer, and how some weaker voices are drowned by louder ones, entities like places, things, and bodies are often treated as instruments and tools that are subordinated to those who can speak and who are allowed to speak—in order to present a postcolonial landscape that is filled with things, places, and bodies, this thesis examines the presence of these entities in the representations of Hong Kong, their voices that tell different stories of Hong Kong and their agencies in influencing how "local" is perceived and conceived. This take is inspired by the expanding scholarship in philosophy and cultural theories that shapes the study of the nonhumans over the last few decades. Regarding the scholarship I consulted in building up the theoretical framework of this thesis, I outline three consecutive phases in the following, in order to explicate the potentialities of places, things, and bodies as an agencies that gives light to a postcolonial perspective in understanding postmillennial Hong Kong.

To begin with, it is noteworthy that the connection between humans and nonhumans has been treated in the name of fetishism since the 19th century and upon the dawn of modernity. In this regard, the discourse of fetishism is mainly composed

of two strands, namely commodity fetishism proposed by Karl Marx in *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* in 1867,[39] and sexual fetishism coined by psychologist Alfred Binet in his essay "Le Fétichisme dans l'amour" in 1887.[40] Despite their different contexts, both forms of fetishism are considered to be pathos of varying degrees that pose adverse effects to the political economy and the human psychology respectively. The first phase arises as a phase of contention, where these readings are subject to challenge. For instance, the automatic equation between thing and commodity is destabilized in the essay compilation *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. In the introduction of the book, Arjun Appadurai, as the editor of the volume, reiterates the need to "follow things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories."[41] In other words, the significance of things actually goes beyond its commodity state and its human-assigned values that are usually taken for granted. In the same collection, Igor Kopytoff stresses the need to trace a cultural biography of things from the angle of things, and he speculates that there is a dimension where things exist beyond monetary value, the capitalist system and the human's mode of exchange.[42] This subsequently reminds me of how William Pietz shakes up the entire discourse of the fetish in his tripartite essays that share the common title "The Problem of the Fetish," wherein the dichotomy of human/nonhuman and the marginalization of the nonhuman as the human's Other are brought into question from a historical point of view and on the philosophical level. According to Pietz, human's distanced attitude towards their nonhuman counterparts is not something that is naturally inborn, but something of a deliberate construction that arises with the emergence of concept of the fetish. By tracing the etymology of the word "fetish," Pietz reveals that the term, along with its several variations, was a sweeping name assigned to things that were worshipped by Africans but remained incomprehensible

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[39] Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," in *Capital: Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1887), 47-48.

[40] Edward Shorter, *Written in the Flesh: A History of Desire* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 220.
William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 9 (Spring 1985): 9.

[41] Arjun Appardurai, "Introduction: Commodities and the Politics of Value," in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appardurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 5.

[42] Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process," in *The Social Life of Things.* Ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-91.

to Europeans, when the two cultures encountered one another during the 16th and the 17th centuries.[43] To this end, the refusal to comprehend the other and the subsequent dismissal of the significances of the cultural, social, and religious practices of the other are indeed the founding basis of the dichotomy between human and nonhuman, where the latter is described as the "nameless" fetish. The power hierarchy between human and nonhuman, therefore, inscribes and is inscribed by imperializing and colonizing forces that not only ignore distinctions and differences of the other, but also suppress (the presence of) the other. This dominating human-nonhuman relationship that is uncovered by Pietz in the mask of fetishism thereby provokes a preliminary postcolonial inquiry, which would be further engaged in later phases.

The second phase is to acknowledge the agency of things, places and bodies in the production of meaning and interpretation. In the scope of literature, Bill Brown in *The Sense of Things* delineates a study of things in selected works from American literature, where he examines specific recurring artefacts as well as the general status of things in specific literature. Brown not only places under spotlight the story of things, referring to things as the protagonists of a narrative; but also reorders the relation between human and thing, subject and object in the wider picture. In delineating a thing theory, Brown writes

> [t]he story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.[44]

With a preference of "thing" over "object," Brown indicates a shift of focus that ultimately leads to the renewal of the conventional subject-object relation which assigns human as the subject and thing as the object. My use of the term "thing" also follows this terminology put forward by Brown. In the scope of cinema studies, Mladen Dolar uses the example of "Hitchcock's objects" to argue that things in cinema should be understood as agents that are capable of inducing material and immaterial effects in the film set, the film narrative, and the film as a whole. In all

[43] Pietz, "The Problem of Fetish, I," 5.
[44] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (Autumn, 2001): 4.

these examples, things come to claim their once-neglected presences and significances in cultural representations. As Dolar states that "every duality is based on a third,"[45] things as the third component enable one to break away from the limitation caused by dichotomous categorization. In other words, things, places, and bodies not only constitute the previously neglected "third," but also offer a potential third dimension where rereading, remediation, and reinterpretation can take place. This emphasis of the third finds expression in academia's call for alternative perspectives and a third imaginary in post-handover, post-hangover Hong Kong. In this case, things, places, and bodies, the building blocks of different Hong Kong stories that are previously overlooked, can precisely offer an alternative perspective.

In the third phase, things, places, and bodies not only regain agencies, but also participate in processes of representation and signification, just as those who can speak and those who are allowed to speak (e.g. humans). In this regard, Michel Serres uses what he calls "quasi-object" and "quasi-subject" to subvert the hierarchical relationship between the host and the parasite, and to prove the interchangeable object and subject positionings:

> [t]his quasi-object is not an object, but it is one nevertheless, since it is not a subject, since it is in the world: it is also a quasi-subject, since it marks or designates a subject, who, without it, would not be a subject.[46]

To put this into practice, Serres speaks of the relationship between a player and a ball in the context of a ball game. Serres argues that "the ball isn't there for the body" but "the body is the object of the ball."[47] By overcoming the subject-active-central position and the object-passive-marginal position, Serres's insights illuminate what I seek to explore in a context of Hong Kong when not only humans and nonhumans are bestowed with equal significances, but textual representations and re-presented entities that are present in the physical reality are also treated in equal terms and weighed by equal agency. Following Serres's argument, Bruno Latour reinstates the

[45] Mladen Dolar, "Hitchcock's Objects," In *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan . . . But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1992), 33.
[46] Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 225.
[47] Ibid., 226

status and the significance of things (objects) in many of his works, for instance, in his conceptualization of "interobjectivity" and his well-known challenge of the constitution of the modern.[48] In the essay "On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods," Latour wittingly correlates the fetish, the obsession with objects that are despised by modern culture, to what he coins as the "factish," the modern obsession with facts and scientific objects which give rises to an abstained form of fetishism.[49] By introducing the "factish" as the third force, Latour unsettles the paradigm between object and subject, fetish and factish, human and nonhuman, premodern and modern; by exposing the internal contradiction and the biased treatment of nonhuman and premodern culture in the development and the application of the concept of the modern, Latour disproves their logic and their reasoning which, under the influence of human-centred Enlightenment philosophy, is often celebrated as a sign of objective rationality taken for granted in the modern society.

Meanwhile, the urge to reorder conventional paradigms, existing perspectives and established relationships through the attention to things and the acknowledgement of their agency is picked up by the movement of object-oriented ontology (OOO), headed by theorists like Graham Harman, Timothy Morton, and Levi Bryant in the academia. OOO is understood by its advocators as

> a form of realism that asserts that real things exist—these things are objects, not just amorphous 'Matter,' objects of all shapes and sizes, from football teams to Fermi-Dirac condensates or, if you prefer something more ecological, nuclear waste and birds' nests.[50]

In this regard, OOO sees itself as "a genuine way out of the recent philosophical impasse of essentialism versus nihilism."[51] What OOO helps me to understand is to beware (and be aware) of the limitation in the modernist mode of thinking and reasoning about things. In other words, in order to revive a new way of seeing and thinking with things, there is a need to steer away from modernist ideas about the

[48] Bruno Latour, "On Interobjectivity," *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 3:4 (1996): 228-245.
[49] Bruno Latour, "On the Cult of the Factish Gods," *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods,* trans. Catherine Porter and Heather MacLean (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-66.
[50] Timothy Morton, "Here comes everything: the promise of object-oriented ontology," *Qui Parle* 19, no. 2 (2011): 165.
[51] Ibid., 164.

privileged role of human in ordering the world (for instance, by means of politics and technology). With all these in mind, I pay special attention to things, places, and bodies that make *fluid* appearances in aesthetic representations as well as in the situated reality in post-1997 Hong Kong. Fluidity, in my deliberation, points to the reciprocity between representation (in/through text) and presence (in physical reality), and between the world constructed in text and the situated reality of the receivers of the text. Consequently, the conventional understanding of the material only as something tangible and palpable is also renewed by a more fluid understanding of the concept: textual representation pertains no less material quality than the represented entity in that is present in the physical reality. This renewed understanding is what I refer to as "malleable materiality."

By landing on the third phase of understanding, I also gain insight to respond to a query in mind during my earlier encounter with Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* in the first phase. In an attempt to bring Kopytoff's proposition into practice, William H. Davenport and Patrick Geary both conclude in their respective essays that there exists a dimension where objects are no longer recognized as a commodity, i.e. "decommoditized."[52] Davenport in his observation made to communities living on Eastern Solomon Islands and Geary in his study of the Middle Ages both refer this dimension to the practice of ritual.[53] What I find it unsettling is the limitation and the constraints faced by these studies in renewing the operation of things as commodity within human society in the name of nothing else but commodity still—as if commodity is always inevitably involved in human's imposition of value and meaning, however minute and arbitrary. In my opinion, in order to trace the "cultural biography of things" effectively, one should understand that commodity (or fetish) is only one out of many labels or characteristics assigned to things; more importantly, it is also necessary to acknowledge the significance of things in situations and dimensions other than human-controlled activities and human-driven markets. In the context of Hong Kong, attention to the nonhumans, therefore, provides a means to steer away not only from colonial and

[52] William H. Davenport, "Two Kinds of Value in the Eastern Solomon Islands," in *The Social Life of Things,* ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 105.
[53] Patrick Geary, "Sacred Commodities: the Circulation of Medieval Relics," in *The Social Life of Things,* ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 169-194.

China-led perspectives (which are nonetheless selectively human-centred), but also from the (neo)liberal-modernist framework with a emphasis on economic success and financial progress, which is criticized by increasingly many in postmillennial Hong Kong.

By the retrospective reflection gained during the three phases of reading, I am even more convinced, not only by Brown's argument in distinguishing thing from object, but also by Serre's justification of the reciprocal relation between a subject and an object: A subject needs an object to mark its presence inasmuch as an object needs a subject to do the same. Reciprocity is, therefore, the key to redistribute meanings and significances over human-nonhuman relations, as well as to rethink the relations between representation and interpretation through the potentiality of remediation. In my thesis, I am inspired by this reciprocal perspective to explore postcolonial subject positions pertained by both humans and nonhumans in processes of representation and interpretation. Last but not least, this doubly postcolonial turn is supported by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's take on "planetary subject" where she expands the concern for the other in postcolonial study to a non-human dimension which includes land, animal, and other animate or inanimate objects.[54] This ultra postcolonial worldview proposed by Spivak therefore bridges the two fields that constitute the theoretical framework of my thesis. With an eye to the reinstated presence and significance of things, places, and bodies, I hitherto explore their possible alternative configurations (i.e. re-configurations) in the postmillennial context of Hong Kong by the double postcolonial turn delineated here. With an eye to the highly entangled and contested relations between the global, the national, and the local in postmillennial Hong Kong, I situate my investigation on the dimension of the local, with a hope to lift the current standoff faced by different Hong Kong stories in flux and in the making by the potential reconfigurations of things, places, and bodies in representation and in reality.

To Be Continued

As an overview, the tactics of backreading reciprocal relations between different realities in texts and in everyday life, and the remediation of representation and

[54] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet* (Vienna: Passagen-Verlag, 1999), 46.

interpretation are building blocks that underline my arguments in the thesis. By mapping out different discourses, phenomena, experiences, cultural expressions, and their relations generated in post-1997 Hong Kong, I observe a significant attention paid to Hong Kong localness in rewriting and rereading Hong Kong stories. Meanwhile, the complexity of Hong Kong's local is explicitly demonstrated in different discourses, through actual events and movements, and by way of cultural expression and phenomena, where the manifold readings of local and the changing (dis)appearances of localness have stirred up unprecedentedly many controversies and contestations across the cultural, social and political spheres in postmillennial Hong Kong. With an eye to the increasing difficulties in defining what local is especially in the post-Umbrella era, how things, places, and bodies converge to form a matrix of rhizomatic relations where local is varyingly perceived and conceived offers planes of observation and discussion that expose the manifestation, operation and translation of localness. Henceforth, I address in the rest of my thesis the processes of transmission, mediation, and interpretation of localness in Hong Kong culture and society that take place mostly in the post-1997 context. With a special focus on the dynamics of things, places, and bodies, and their recycling, remediation, and representation in narratives and in realities, I explore how varying cultural responses, channelled out through artistic expression in the postcolonial context of Hong Kong, provide important clues to the repositioning of Hong Kong, and Hong Kong's local in the seemingly chaotic pool of unidentified or ambivalent identities, sentiments, subjectivities, and voices.

With all these in the background, a detailed discussion of "local" as a concept, an expression, a value and others is unfolded in Chapter 2. Through the tactics of backreading and remediation, the chapter proposes to read Hong Kong localness as "Hong Kong localnesses" in a plural form. The activities of "Kowloon King" Tsang Tsou-choi to be examined, complicated by the representation and the interpretation of him and his calligraphy in Hong Kong and abroad, crisscross different time-spaces of colonial and post-1997 Hong Kong, and provide a plane to explore how local attachments and consciousnesses are manifested differently in different contexts, and how local experiences and sensibilities are at times shared, and at times disowned by the local population on different levels. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, Sung Wong Toi (Song Emperor's Terrace) and Lion Rock, as rocks as well as locales in Hong Kong

with varying cultural connotations, provide eloquent examples of the operation of the nonhuman in gearing the formation, transformation, and translation of Hong Kong localnesses in changing socio-political landscapes. By making the invisible visible, my investigation reintroduces the overlooked, the dis-appeared, and the repressed to the cultural paradigm of Hong Kong, where previously invisible or veiled frontiers, such as the dominating political authority and the hangover state of Hong Kong after 1997, are made visible. Following this, Chapter 5 examines two contrasting spectatorships of the film *Ten Years* (2015) and brings out inquiries on how hybridity, marginality, and in-between-ness are played out, applied, or rejected, when the representation and the interpretation of Hong Kong stories (vastly Hong Kong culture and identity) are becoming seemingly more and more polemic and exclusionary. In this chapter, the film *Ten Years* and its spectatorships are examined in connection to the presence/absence, and the representation/non-representation of localness on various planes. The reciprocal relation between the world of text and the world of spectators extends the discussion to appearance and disappearance, and their varying manifestations and impacts in Hong Kong at large. As a result of the previous chapters, Chapter 5 ultimately presents a crossing point that guides us to examine different contested readerships of Hong Kong and Hong Kong's local in Hong Kong and beyond.

Meanwhile, by distributing equal attention to cultural representations and actual socio-cultural phenomena, and to the worlds of texts and the situated realities of the readers and the writers, the thesis provides different planes to look at how local is reciprocally conceived and perceived in different Hong Kong stories by the transmission and the translation of things, places, and bodies in processes of representation and interpretation across different media over different times. In all these instances, situatedness again offers another point of reflection, as the investigation partaken in this thesis concerning Hong Kong localnesses, Hong Kong stories, and related things, places, and bodies involved, is bound to be time-specific and space-particular—such that the emergence of this thesis can ultimately be read as a response to as well as an experience of the current era of Hong Kong, where a variety of identities, sentiments, subjectivities, and voices participate in manifesting Hong Kong localnesses and telling different Hong Kong stories.

In a time when the hangover state of Hong Kong is fading, what has emerged is apparently a painstaking scene where Hong Kong stories are then filled with disenchantment and disillusionment. When the illusion of Hong Kong as a harmonious postcolonial space is shattered, the rise of local consciousness and the attention shed on Hong Kong's local bring observable transformations in how 'Hong Kong' itself is conceived and perceived in cultural expression and in reality. This therefore makes it important in my thesis to explore particular things, places, and bodies in narratives and in everyday life, which facilitate the articulation of Hong Kong localnesses in different forms, appearances, and affinities. By examining the postcolonial condition shared by Hong Kong and all these once-muted or obscured agencies, the project helps the invisible or neglected local relations between things, places, bodies and 'Hong Kong' to resurface; and by mapping alternative Hong Kong stories through these narratives, the project engenders a new politics of representation, materiality and remediation of the 21st century.

Chapter 2 - Hong Kong Localnesses: Translation, Transformation, and Remediation

> I don't care about money and fame [...] They should just give me back the throne. I am not an artist–I am simply the King.
>
> –"Kowloon King" Tsang Tsou-choi

"[Hong Kong's] 'Local' is not something new that emerged over the past ten years," writer and cultural critic Lawrence Kwok-ling Pun wrote in *City Magazine* in 2013,[55] a time when the term "local" has already become more and more contested in Hong Kong, due to its many connotations, implications and applications that are at times blurry and at times contradictory. In recent years, heated debates concerning the topic gives rise to a divided understanding of Hong Kong's local and different controversies in related subject matters (e.g. the emergence of various forms of localism), which, in return, make it even harder to lead a mutually understandable discussion on Hong Kong's local—not to mention the ceaseless attempts of different bodies in defining what Hong Kong's local is. Therefore, the fuzzy vision cast on Hong Kong's local over the recent decade is directly correspondent to the various appearances and manifestations of Hong Kong's localness in the social, political, and cultural realms. Conversely, the difficulty in pinning down what Hong Kong's local is precisely a cause of its complexity and its ambiguity. Nonetheless, reflected in the illusion of seeing Hong Kong's local as something new—as what Pun has rebuked in the opening quote—is indeed the renewed interests in Hong Kong's local and its related discussion in the postmillennial era.

While Hong Kong localness is being continuously expressed by means of utterances, texts, and discursive practices, I trace in this chapter the manifold roles played by representation, interpretation, and mediation in conceiving Hong Kong's local and in casting material impacts on the reverberations of Hong Kong localness in the world(s) of text and the situated realities of the perceivers. Despite the unsettling

[55] Lawrence Kwok-ling Pun 潘國靈, "'Bentu' de shinian bianhua" 「本土」的十年變化 [Ten-year Transformation of 'Local'], *City Magazine* 號外 2013 July Issue, accessed October 10, 2016.

nature and the indeterminacy of Hong Kong's local (which had previously been outlined in Chapter 1), social phenomena, real-life events, and cultural representations—wherein localness is varyingly conceived and perceived—can help to uncover the translation, transformation, and mediation of Hong Kong's local across the social, political, and cultural realms. In light of this, "Kowloon King" Tsang Tsou-choi and his calligraphy provide an interesting case here: Self-proclaimed "King" since the 1950s in colonial Hong Kong, Tsang Tsou-choi spent decades writing his family's "hi stories," to borrow Sai Sai's use of the term (which is discussed in Chapter 1), on different surfaces he found in the streets. The connection he made to the local territory and local history gives light to the discussion of local. When Tsang earned his fame as a representative figure of Hong Kong and Hong Kong culture in the late 1990s and onward, a particular form of Hong Kong localness is solicited as an embodiment carried by Tsang. His urban activities, and the works he produced in the city not only knit together the manifold dimensions of representation and mediation, but can also be regarded as an alternative response to the colonial-postcolonial and the handover-hangover transitions of Hong Kong. In regard to the discussion undertaken in Chapter 1, we are reminded that colonialism(s) and the condition of postcoloniality shall be understood beyond temporal constrains, and diplomatic and political formalities like the handover ceremony of 1997. In this case, Kowloon King can be regarded as an embodiment of varying local sensibilities where sedimented colonial experiences are interwoven with postcolonial sentiments in-the-making—from this way of seeing, the contestation of "local" in postmillennial Hong Kong not only brings about different manifested forms of Hong Kong's local that are caught in the ongoing processes of translation and transformation, but also gives light to *Hong Kong localnesses* where the former can undergo mediation and remediation.

In opposition to a fixated, static perspective that constrains the readership of Hong Kong localness to a singular form, I hope to rejuvenate different ways of reading and rereading Hong Kong's local by means of an interdisciplinary approach, and by the redistribution of agency to various things, places and bodies through intermediation and remediation. My aim is not only to inscribe a plural form to

localness as "Hong Kong localnesses";[56] but exposing this plurality, or in other words, making the plural form effective, in "Hong Kong localnesses" is equally important. Empowered by the change of wording (from localness to localness*es*), we can now explore the conceptual construct of "local" from various rhizomatic points of view—to this end, the apparent difficulties in mapping out a comprehensive picture of Hong Kong localness, which are translated by many as an obstacle in producing a common ground for any rational discussion to take place, are indeed transformed into an opportunity to read against the grain by practicing multiple ways of reading simultaneously. To start with, the interconnection between the social, political, and cultural realms in which localness is varyingly situated and manifested has to be recognized and reinstated, such that the discussion of local—amidst its different understanding, manifestation, and mediation as localnesses—can be further developed by analysing the case of Kowloon King in the second part of this chapter. During this process, the bundle is expected to get even more complicated at times, but the entire picture will ultimately become clearer as muted relationships and agencies are uncovered.

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[56] My use of "Hong Kong localnesses" is inspired by the discussion of "Chinesenesses" led by Rey Chow and Ien Ang. In the essay "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm," Ang famously problematizes the different uses of Chinese and Chineseness, as she wrote: "being Chinese outside China cannot possibly mean the same thing as inside..." (225). This critical dimension is well applied to the study of cinema. For instance, Yingjin Zhang in the introduction to the book *Chinese National Cinema* raises the question of whether putting Chineseness in a plural form (in his words, "many kinds of Chinese cinemas and their corresponding Chinesenesses") can address what Rey Chow has in doubt for the terms "Chinese" and "Chineseness." Despite the use of "Chinese National Cinema" as the title of the book, Zhang distinguishes between mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan as what he refers to as the "three Chinas" and the different articulations of the nation in cinema produced in these three regions (4). In Ox*ford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas,* editor Carlos Rojas also emphasizes on the "interpretive spaces" that can be opened up by the conceptions of "Chinese cinemas" (5). Last but not least, the pluralization of Chineseness is discussed in Hilary Hongjin He's essay "'Chinesenesses' Outside Mainland China: Macao and Taiwan through Post-1997 Hong Kong Cinema," where "Hong Kong's uniqueness" is positioned by He as a "composite/cosmopolitan Chinese-ness" (323).
For further references, see:
Ien Ang, "Can One Say No to Chineseness? Pushing the Limits of the Diasporic Paradigm," *Boundary* 2 25, no. 3 (1998): 223-242. doi:10.2307/303595.
Hilary Hongjin He, "'Chinesenesses' Outside Mainland China: Macao and Taiwan through Post-1997 Hong Kong Cinema," *Cultural Unbound* 4 (2012): 297-325. doi: 10.3384/cu.2000.1525.124297
Carlos Rojas, Introduction to. *Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinemas*, ed. Carlos Rojas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-20.
Yingjin Zhang, "Introduction: National cinema and China," in *Chinese National Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-10.

Local as an Entanglement: A Problem of Partitioning?

Indubitably, the difficulties in articulating Hong Kong's local have its roots planted in the indeterminate meanings and affects possessed by Hong Kong's localness; however, what is usually left unsaid is that the unsettledness and the ambiguity embodied by the term "local" are indeed productive markers that can reveal the changing positionings occupied by Hong Kong's local at different times, across different spaces, and in different contexts. With this in mind, the divided understanding of Hong Kong's local in the postmillennial era shall not be treated as an impasse that obstructs discussion and annihilates meanings; while the causes to such impression of seeing Hong Kong's local as an entanglement can be traced to the problem of (non-)partitioning and the question of ownership that drive the local discourse in post-1997 Hong Kong.

I refer to 'partition' as the barriers encountered by "local" as a concept when it travels from one discipline, one context, and one culture to another. This echoes Mieke Bal's concern with "travelling concepts" and the necessity she proposes to locate their semantic changes in cultural analysis:

> They [the concepts] travel—between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities. Between disciplines, their meaning, reach, and operational value differ.[57]

In postmillennial Hong Kong, one obstacle faced by the concept "local" during its travels is the polemic treatments of borders: sometimes too rigid, sometimes too relaxed—the two extremes of partition and non-partition thereby create an uneven passageway where some meanings are continued while some are discontinued; some alterations take place while some do not, or even cannot. With an eye to the various localisms that have become active in postmillennial Hong Kong, how they are represented in the post-Umbrella Movement era indeed tells us a lot about the problem of (non-)partitioning.

In view of the 2016 Legislative Council (LegCo) general election and its

[57] Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 24.

outcome, the rise of a so-called "localist" front was a general observation reckoned by the media, local and overseas. With reference to the list of candidates that was released three months before the election took place, South China Morning Post (SCMP), a Hong Kong-based, English-language newspaper, started to use the term "localist" to describe an emerging political orientation, which is contained neither in the conventional pan-democracy camp,[58] nor in the pro-Establishment camp.[59] In reporting the election results, both Chinese-language and English-language media referred the six newly-elected candidates—namely Nathan Kwung-chung Law of Demosistō, Eddie Hoi-dick Chu of Land Justice League, Siu-lai Lau of Democracy Groundwork, Chung-tai Cheng of Civic Passion, and Sixtus "Baggio" Chung-hang Leung and Wai-ching Yau of Youngspiration—to the "localist" as an individual and, alternatively, the "localist camp" as a collective whole. The formation of this localist front that has never been represented before in any institution like the Legislative Council over the course of Hong Kong's history subsequently caught the attention of the media and other stakeholders in the arena such as the Hong Kong Government and the Beijing government in China.[60] Since then, "localist" has become an umbrella term not only to describe these newcomers of politics who gain momentum after the 2014 Umbrella Movement, but also to envelope the new tensions and the alternative voices arisen in Hong Kong society at large. Yet, what makes it even more intriguing and, at the same time, more complicated is that this so-called 'localist' front is comprised of various individuals and political groups with divided political aspirations and different takes on the local—the disparities within the localist front

[58] The pan-democracy camp in Hong Kong consists of several political parties of different scales and target groups. The milder side include Civic Party, Democratic Party, Neo Democrats, among others; whereas People Power and League of Social Democrats are often considered to lie on the radical side of this spectrum.

[59] The pro-Establishment camp in Hong Kong consists of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), Liberal Party, New People's Party, among others. Due to the pro-Beijing stance and the close connection of this camp with the political power in China, its members are regarded by the ruling Communist Party of China as patriots and their medium to cast influence in Hong Kong; therefore, members of this camp are generally called, especially by the pro-democrats, as the "Beijing loyalists," since their power in Hong Kong is built up on Beijing's direct and indirect support which is endorsed by the Hong Kong SAR Government.

[60] Some examples include: "The rise of the localists fighting for seats on Hong Kong's Legislative Council," *South China Morning Post*, July 30, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/1996599/rise-localists-fighting-seats-hong-kongs-legislative-council.

"Hong Kong Legislative Council polls: voters change the city's political landscape," *South China Morning Post*, September 6, 2016, accessed September 25, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2015363/hong-kong-legislative-council-polls-voters-change-citys.

thereby reveal the complexity looming behind oft-used terms such as "local" and "localist," and the intricacy when they travel from one place to another. With this in mind, we are again reminded of the danger in fixating travelling concepts as such to a one-sided dimension of comprehension (i.e. without considering the generative and productive nature of interpretation) and a one-way process of representation (i.e. without considering the reciprocal effects generated by the continuous acts of mediation and remediation). The uneven treatment between partition and non-partition becomes even more telling, as the concept of "local" travels from the political arena to the cultural realm.

Arriving at the cultural scene, "local" is often employed in compound terms such as "local flavour" and "local lifestyle." This echoes what Pun has pointed out concerning the function of the term "local" in the 1970s where the term describes a local way of living that is different from the culture of the colonizer—to this end, the consumption of milk-tea and egg tart, according to Pun, is a telling example of the local lifestyle enjoyed by Hong Kong people under British colonialism.[61] In contrast to the postmillennial political context aforementioned, Hong Kong's local in the 1970s did not pertain much wide-spreading political connotation, nor was it regarded as something bestowed with cultural value. On the surface, "local" seemingly differentiates the everyday practice of a local Hong Kong person from imported cultures (for instance, that of the colonizer); it is, however, noteworthy that milk-tea and egg tart—as examples aforementioned—are indeed the results of cultural synthesis. On the one hand, what is considered "local" is hereby not entirely 'local,' if the most extreme and, at the same time, the most essentialist meaning of the term is taken into consideration (cf. "nativist," "indigenous"). On the other hand, Hong Kong's local—as it can be conceived and perceived through different things, places and persons—is indeed not at all a stable constant, but an ever-changing variable. Moreover, when Hong Kong's local is manifested and mediated by actual things like milk-tea and egg tart, these things with material qualities are also, in return, considered as embodiments of Hong Kong localness. The complexity hereby unveiled attributes to the peculiar nature of Hong Kong's local, making it articulable and perceivable through agencies with material dimensions (however malleable), but

[61] Pun, "Ten-year Transformation of 'Local'."

inexplicable in definitive terms, discrete characteristics, and specific formulae (in rigid black and white). Hong Kong localnesses that are evoked in these rhizomatic processes therefore possess a high degree of hybridity and reciprocity.

Furthermore, local can be translated through derivatives, associations, and connotations; and its resultant manifold appearances come to mark a process of transformation. In the context of postmillennial Hong Kong, the term "local" is, for instance, often bestowed to things, places, and bodies that constitute the collective memories of the local population and that are capable of inciting nostalgic sentiments in the society. This reciprocal, interactive relationship between Hong Kong's local, collective memories, and nostalgic sentiments is the backbone of many retrospective events and exhibitions that took place in real life. One exemplar is the recurrent propagation of Hong Kong localness through the references paid to the Lion Rock, a place as well as a rock in Hong Kong, which is generally understood as a symbol of Hong Kong spirit and an icon of Hongkongness (see Table 2.1 below). While different cultural reverberations of the Lion Rock will be further analysed in Chapter 4, it is important to note, for the time being, how the Lion Rock in all these events and instances is turned into a common locus, where the notion of local is mutually understood in form of collective memories and cultural knowledge, by means of recognisable style and aesthetics, and through the fabrication of a generally accepted identity.

Date	**Name of Event**	**Organizer(s)**	**Event Details**
September 15-November 1, 2011	Anybody Left under the Lion Rock? A solo exhibition of Cassian Lau 「獅子山下仲有冇人」劉啟舜作品展	OC Gallery	The exhibition displayed Lau's paintings which were inspired by his memories and impression of Hong Kong
December 21, 2011 - July 30, 2012	Below the Lion Rock, Applauding Hong Kong Pop Legend: Roman Tam 獅子山下・掌聲響起・羅文	Hong Kong Heritage Museum	An exhibition dedicated to Roman Tam, who is the singer of the song "Below the Lion Rock" and is deemed one of the most highly recognized cultural icons of Hong Kong

July 27 - September 15, 2013	Below the Lion Rock with Hello Kitty Hello Kitty 走過獅子山下	Langham Place	With an aim to celebrating collective memories, the exhibition displayed miniatures that were constructed after different iconic locales in Hong Kong.
November 2, 2013	Lion Rock Music Festival 2013	168 Production, Music Nation, Zhong Xing Entertainment Culture, Star Studio, and Tomson International Entertainment	An outdoor music festival, held in the West Kowloon Waterfront Promenade, to promote local pop and rock music
February 28 - March 15, 2015	People Below the Lion Rock 港人情繫獅子山	Hong Kong Film Archive	The event provided screenings of selected episodes of the RTHK programme *Below the Lion Rock* which were first aired in the 1970s.
May 2 - July 5, 2015	Our Rocking City 山下・我城	Hulu Culture	An outdoor exhibition where the history and the cultural heritage of the Wong Tai Sin and the Kowloon City areas were recounted
July 19 - 21, 2015	New Lion Rock Spirit Photo exhibition 「新獅子山精神」攝影展	ACO Book	A photo exhibition to explore the theme of the "new lion rock spirit"
June 19, 2015	Lion Rock Music Festival 2015	King George V School	Students' music festival
March 18, 2016	Lion Rock Music Festival 2016	King George V School	Students' music festival

Table 2.1 Public events organized in Hong Kong from 2011 to 2016 with different allusions to Lion Rock

From the transmission and the embodiment of localness via cultural things such as milk-tea, egg tart, and Lion Rock, "local" acquires different added (cultural) value and meanings as it is conceived in different occasions, on different levels, and at different times (i.e. the travelling of "local"). In the list of public events shown in the above, the persistent presence of Lion Rock entails cultural implications that share similitude and dissimilitude to different degrees. On the common ground, phrases like "below the Lion Rock" or "under the Lion Rock" make explicit reference to a long-running television programme of the same name, which is produced by the government-run channel Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and was first

broadcasted in the early 1970s; the same title is also used by the theme song of the programme, which is performed and made known by Roman Tam (viz. the title of the exhibition held at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum in memorial of Tam). In brief, phrases such as "below the Lion Rock" and "under the Lion Rock" are thereby commonly understood by the local population as a connotation to Hong Kong at large (see Chapter 4). By surveying the list of activities named after Lion Rock, one can find on one side of the spectrum the surge of nostalgic sentiments and collective memories, where Lion Rock is an embodiment of local flavours or qualities in the eye of the beholder (e.g. exhibitions and tours with a theme of reminiscing the past like "Our Rocking City" and "Below the Lion Rock with Hello Kitty"); whereas, on the other side, there is a tendency of generating newness—from the rise of a new generation to the experimental attempts in renewing cultural symbols like Lion Rock (e.g. gigs like "Lion Rock Music Festival" that introduce newcomers to the musical scene and the reinvention of Lion Rock through visual representation in "New Lion Rock Spirit Photo exhibition"). To this end, the sentimentality embedded in the transmission as well as the transformation of Hong Kong's local again confirms the ongoing negotiation and remediation of meanings, affects and experiences—old and new, before and after 1997. Last but not least, plurality is, meanwhile, the key to accommodate the ever-changing and sometimes even contradicting values, meanings, and experiences that are constantly absorbed by and injected into Hong Kong's local.

Arriving at this level of understanding "local" as a travelling concept, we shall not assign rigid barriers to local, which would ultimately become the obstacles of comprehending its plurality; instead, there is a need to give space to the manifold implications of the term to be actualized, such that all the unequal partitions and non-partitions between different appearances of local across different texts and contexts can be understood as what Bal treats as semantic changes.[62] In order to untangle the current impasse in coping with Hong Kong's local that Pun mentions with a sigh at the end of his article, one has to make visible what I refer to as "localnesses": first, by ridding of the singular form; second, by dissolving the unequal forces which is a cause to the fuzziness of the concept. To achieve the second step, the problem of ownership has to be unsettled—after all, can "localnesses," albeit its suggestive

[62] Bal, *Travelling Concepts*.

multitude, be free from the unequal distribution of agencies and voices?

A Problem of Ownership: Localnesses as an Entanglement?

For ten days in 2016, from June 6 to 17, *Ta Kung Pao*, a Chinese-language newspaper funded by China and published in Hong Kong, invested half a page each day to define what Hong Kong's local should be like in terms of everyday life practice, Hong Kong-China relationship, attitude towards the political regime of China, and so on.[63] The special topic in focus is enveloped by a fictional conversation between a mother figure named Mrs Lee and her son Little Keung. According to the editor's words published in the first episode, Mrs Lee is concerned about Little Keung, who has just been admitted to the university and has "followed suit to join some localist organizations like many other young people do."[64] In a question-and-answer format, the conversation between Little Keung (the one who asks) and Mrs Lee (the one who provides answers) takes place; while the editor's words that appear in the first episode are later on replaced by a brief narration delivered by an anonymous but seemingly omniscient 'narrator' in the beginning of each episode. Hong Kong-China linkage—in the form of political ties,[65] geographical proximity,[66] cultural and historical legacy,[67]

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[63] The significance of this special feature to this newspaper is revealed in the two web pages that were set up (with differences in their interface) to host this feature topic online. The first page is hosted by *Ta Kung Pao*, who printed the features on their newspaper:
"Li Tai gang bentu" 李太港本土 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local], *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, accessed 8 March, 2017, http://news.Ta Kung Pao.com/special/ltgbt/,
The second page (http://sp.wenweipo.com/2016lt/) is apparently hosted by *Wenweipo*, which is also a China-owned Chinese-language newspaper.

[64] "Li Tai gang bentu (1): 'Yi guo liang zhi' Xianggang fazhan shouhuzhe" 李太港本土(一):「一國兩制」香港發展守護者 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (1): 'One Country Two Systems' Guards the Development of Hong Kong], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 6, 2016, , accessed 8 March, 2017, http://news.Ta Kung Pao.com.hk/hkol/topnews/2016-06/3329823.html

[65] Ibid.
Also in "Li Tai gan bentu (8): hexin jiazhi xu hanwei, pohuai fazhi linanrong" 李太港本土(八)：核心價值須捍衛, 破壞法治理難容 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (8): Defend the Core Values, The Destruction of Law and Order is Intolerable], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 15, 2016.
"Li Tai gan bentu (9): biaobang 'yongwu' ziqi qiren 'gangdu' bixian juelu" 李太港本土(九)：標榜「勇武」自欺欺人 「港獨」必陷絕路 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (9): Hong Kong Independence is a Scam], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 16, 2016.

[66] "Li Tai gan bentu (2): bentu yu guojia bu maodun, Xianggangren gengshi Zhongguoren" 李太港本土(二)：本土與國家不矛盾, 香港人更是中國人 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (2): Local and the Nation Do Not Contradict, Hong Kong People are Chinese], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 7, 2016.
"Li Tai gan bentu (10): qin bentu ai guojia, zhongshi Xianggang jingshen" 李太港本土(十)：親本土愛國家, 重拾香港精神 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (10): Stay Local, Love the Country], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 17, 2016.

and economic connection[68]—is the central argument of the newspaper, where any characteristic or way of thought that does not conform to this ideology of closeness and oneness is considered by the newspaper as some "false" manifestation and "incorrect" representation of Hong Kong's local. In pursuit of its argument, the newspaper in the voice of Mrs Lee ceaselessly attempts to impose what 'genuine' local should be like and how it can be differentiated from the so-called 'false' local. With an eye to these set-ups, it is not hard to uncover a preset narrative that puts the ideological indoctrination of the crafted conversation between Mrs Lee and Little Keung in disguise. In this case, the featured discussion, located on the inside page, "Hong Kong News," of the newspaper, is not only far from objective and neutral, but is indeed executed according to a plan studded with ideological 'teachings.'

It is now clear that, in a didactic tone, the newspaper makes its open and obvious attempts to set forth a kind of "political correctness"[69] that is approved by the state ideology of the People's Republic of China where "local," "localism," and "localness" are often viewed by the Chinese authority as sweeping, undifferentiated

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[67] "Li Tai gan bentu (4): neidi Xianggang zigu yi jiaren" 李太港本土(四)：內地香港自古一家人 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (4): Mainland and Hong Kong are a Family Since Antiquity], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 9, 2016.
"Li Tai gan bentu (6): yuwen bu didui ronghui geng duoyuan, Yueyu putonghua shuanggui xing" 李太港本土(六)：語文不敵對融會更多元, 粵語普通話雙軌行 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (6): Getting Rid of Linguistic Hostility, Speaking Cantonese, and Mandarin], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 13, 2016.
"Li Tai gan bentu (7): jianrong bingxu zhongxi jiaohui, xianjiang wenhua genzai zhonghua" 李太港本土(七)：兼容并蓄中西交匯, 香江文化根在中華 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (7): Hong Kong Culture is Rooted in China], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 14, 2016.

[68] "Li Tai gan bentu (5): zuguo shi Xianggang jingji beikao zhi shan" 李太港本土(五)：祖國是香港經濟背靠之山 [Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local (5): The Motherland is the Backbone of Hong Kong's economy], *Ta Kung Pao*, June 10, 2016.

[69] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, "political correctness" refers to "the avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against"; however, in the context of Hong Kong, "political correctness" is used differently, as it implies a self-censored tendency to conform to the state ideology of China's Communist Party, and refrain from delivering any speech or action that would incite the central authority of Beijing. The first Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chi-hwa, his policy advisors and other senior government officers are deemed the ones who first initiated the attention to "political correctness" in the operation of the Hong Kong SAR government.
Reference: Shiu-hung Lo, "The Chief Executive and the Business: A Marxist Class Perspective," in *The First Tung Chee-hwa Administration: The First Five Years of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*, ed. Lau Siu-kai (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2002), 289-328 (esp. 298).

concepts that are connected to dissents and separationism.[70] The problem of (non-)partitioning that is examined earlier is now followed by another question concerning the non-partitioned 'ownership' of the term, where meanings are rigidly fixed and vertically allocated in a top-down manner. Of course, no one can truly 'own' a term; however, *Ta Kung Pao*, by building up binary dichotomies of right/wrong, true/false, and politically correct/incorrect creates partitions (e.g. 'true'/'good' local versus 'false'/'bad' local) on the one hand; and deepens particular non-partitions on the other hand (e.g. the unreflective equation of the advocacy for local, localism and the pro-independence stance)—largely unnecessary but immensely effective, these newly enforced barriers and selectively relaxed borders subsequently impose prerequisites in the conceptualization and the reception of Hong Kong's local, and hence reveals the newspaper's ambition in reconstructing the local discourse by reconditioning its parameters, thus earning more shares in the virtual 'ownership' of the term. In a rather self-explanatory example, *Ta Kung Pao* suggests in the concluding episode of this series published on June 17 that any advocacy for Hong Kong's local should meet the criteria of patriotism (to China): "Staying local is to love the country" (親本土就要愛國家), says Mrs Lee[71]—this certainly recalls the oft-promoted patriotic sentiments (or

[70] During his visit to Hong Kong in 2016, Zhang Dejiang, a high-ranking official of the Communist Party of China, openly condemned the pro-independence stance in Hong Kong that is promoted in the name of "localism." Likewise, Cheung Chi-kong, the executive director of the One Country Two Systems Research Institute, also used similar Beijing-backed tropes like separationism to describe Hong Kong's localism. Cheung's condemnation of localism in an article published by *Mingpao*, a Chinese-language newspaper in Hong Kong, echoes to what was discussed by *Ta Kung Pao* in the same year. While the exact term "localism" remains unmentioned in the "Mrs Lee on Hong Kong's Local" series, the discussion of localism is indeed masked in the series' discussion of "local"—the lack of differentiation between local and localism not only causes ambiguity to any discussion concerning the respective concern; but the ambiguity that is intensified by the equation drawn between the two terms also creates an illusion that to make a critique on localism is to apply the same on local. This intended confusion can, to a certain extent, be understood as a rhetorical strategy. As a whole, the three examples also indicate the vigorous attempts in denouncing local and localism as political opposition.
See:
Kris Cheng, "China's Zhang Dejiang slams localism and Hong Kong independence movement," *Hong Kong Free Press*, May 18, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/05/18/chinas-zhang-deijiang-slams-hong-kongs-localism-and-independence-movements/.
Chi-kong Cheung 張志剛, "Shi bentu zhuyi huanshi fenli zhuyi?" 是本土主義 還是分離主義? [Is it Localism, or Separationism?], *Mingpao* 明報, January 5, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://news.mingpao.com/pns/dailynews/web_tc/article/20160106/s00003/1452017380302.

[71] I chose to use "stay local" in my translation of the phrase, as the original Chinese version writes "qin bentu" (親本土). The word "qin" (親) in this context has a meaning of "be close to," which is different from the verb "be" (where a more direct connection is suggested).

simply the buzzwords "love China, love Hong Kong") in socio-political contexts, ranging from the selection of the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, the implementation of morale and national education, to the initiation of cross-border collaboration projects and agreements between Hong Kong and China.

Despite the fact that the pedagogical approach is, for sure, challengeable and the indoctrination of ideology is as well highly problematic, *Ta Kung Pao*'s discussion of the topic demonstrates the feasibility in conceptualizing Hong Kong's local in multiple dimensions and by various methods. With an eye to these attempts but by maintaining a critical and analytical distance, the notion of local is, for instance, measured in geographic and spatial terms, inasmuch as it can be contextualized in a historical perspective, a cultural dimension, and socio-economical relations. To a certain extent, the flexibility of Hong Kong's local is confirmed by the visible travelling of the term across different spheres—only that the newspaper takes advantage of this flexibility (i.e. non-partition) on the one hand, and bars the manifold interpretations of the term from emerging (i.e. partition) on the other hand. There are many instances where the newspaper preconfigures the conditions of conceiving and perceiving Hong Kong's local according to the stances that flavour the ideology they uphold: for instance, the existence of local places or areas is acknowledged, but they are all considered as a collective that is contained under the scope of the nation, i.e. China (Episode 2); when the newspaper reiterates the "pain" and the "humiliation" through British colonization of Hong Kong it also suggests that Hong Kong and China are deemed connected and inseparable since ancient times (Episode 4); likewise, the newspaper also sets forth the cultural, the linguistic, and the economic links between Hong Kong and China in a similar taken-for-granted attitude. Embedded in all these gestures is a hierarchical relationship that is at work not only between the local and the national (which certainly epitomizes the relationship between Hong Kong and China in the eyes of Beijing in reality), but also between different representations of Hong Kong's local (for instance, certain reading or readership that is approved by the state ideology of the political regime of China versus those that are not). Henceforth, it is not enough just to recognize the disparities between different understandings of Hong Kong's local—one major problem of ownership precisely stems from the different attempts and agendas in dominating the

discourse by projecting one's voice and disowning the others. Earlier in this chapter, it is demonstrated how localnesses, by acquiring a plural form, can assist with and make aware the travelling of the term "local," with a view to delimit the fixated perspective and the rigid meaning mounted to the concept. In coping with the problem of ownership, a new perspective is opened up by acknowledging the mutual presence of a multitude of readings, meanings, and agencies. Yet, localnesses would have committed the same fallacy as its singular form did, if the unequal distribution of the agencies and their impacts, and the different intensity of their voices were not addressed. In other words, in differentiating "localnesses" from its singular form, the additional "-es" does not mean *many that is contained in one [word]*, but the term "localnesses" should be understood as *one [word] that contains many*. Be it "localness" or "localnesses," both are a double-edged sword that has the ability to produce limitation on the one hand, and the potential to delimit these limitations on the other, depending on how they are positioned and mediated.

So far in this chapter, I alternatingly made visible and problematized the "-es" in "localnesses." The acts of mediation and the possibility to remediate are vital in maintaining different rhizomatic positions, thus keeping "localnesses" open, fluid and mobile. Be it Pun's example of egg tart and milk-tea, or *Ta Kung Pao*'s manipulation of geographical, historical, cultural, and economic ties, mediation and remediation play an important role in correlating different forms of relations and a wide variety of cultural texts to the pluralistic notion of localnesses, hence causing oscillations in conception and perception, as well as representation and interpretation all the time. In the following, the discussion will continue with the case of Kowloon King, with a demonstration of how certain things, places, and bodies in the society are bestowed with cultural values through mediation and remediation over time, and hence become connected to different representations and interpretations of Hong Kong's local—by uncovering the connection between things, places, bodies, and different understandings of local, it is revealed that localnesses are indeed conjured up and can be positioned differently by different configurations of thing, place, and bodies, where their agencies are simultaneously acknowledged.

All Hail the Kowloon King!

The legendary story of Kowloon King involves a man called Tsang Tsou-choi 曾灶財 (1921-2007) and begins at the moment when he crowned himself king. Born in the Guangdong province in China in 1921, Tsang Tsou-choi moved to Hong Kong in 1937 and had since then lived in the city until he passed away in 2007. While Tsang Tsou-choi's cross-border movement and the hardship he endured in making a living in Hong Kong mirror many similar life stories of his contemporaries of that era, what makes Tsang stand out is not only his outspoken position towards colonialism (which will be discussed towards the end of this chapter), but also the habit of street-writing that he took up since the 1950s and that allowed him to achieve the former. For fifty years, Tsang—with a brush and a jar of ink in his hands—had actively engaged in writing his family history and personal story on different surfaces of the city, ranging from lampposts and electricity boxes to post boxes. Over time, these activities of Tsang not only open up a plane where he gradually becomes acknowledged as a "(graffiti/calligraphy) artist," a "king," and a "local" icon,[72] and therefore a certain form of localness is manifested and understood through a designated constellation of things (e.g. Tsang's works, objects he wrote on etc.), places (e.g. the locations where Tsang's writings are/were found, the places that Tsang mentioned in his writings etc.), and bodies (e.g. Tsang himself, his readers, his ancestors, and his commentators etc.); but all these acts of representation, interpretation, and mediation indeed help to redistribute the significance of some overlooked things and places into our ways of seeing, to take into account their agencies in cultural movements and cultural productions, and to rekindle the relations between these things, places, bodies and Hong Kong.

[72] The "iconicity" of Tsang in postcolonial Hong Kong is discussed by Carolyn Cartier in connection with the urban space and the exhibition space that are circumscribed by Tsang's works. See,
Carolyn Cartier, "Image, Precariousness and the Logic of Cultural Production in Hong Kong," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 9, no. 3 (2013): 11-12. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.5130/portal.v9i3.2554.

Fig 2.1 A pillar at the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier covered by Tsang Tsou-choi's writing. (Photo by Wrightbus)

Components of Local, Bearers of Localnesses

During his creative process, Tsang dealt with things in the plainest sense of their being, as he had to look for surfaces to write on—his canvas turned out to be walls, pavements, electricity boxes, lampposts, post-boxes, and various other things in the city. Albeit this, the agency possessed by things, and places occupied by these things should not be confined by Tsang's pragmatic attitude towards them, for that these things enable Tsang's writings to appear in public space, and the things that manage to remain after Tsang's death also stand as testimonies to his writings, his stories, and his activities in the city. In this regard, the attention and the significance redistributed to things and places renew our reading experience in a time that is described by Walter Benjamin as "the age of mechanical reproduction."[73] Benjamin famously criticized the loss of aura in artworks since images (and especially the images of the artworks) had become reproducible due to the advancement in printing techniques and the invention of cinema and photography. Benjamin wrote,

> [d]uring long periods of history, the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire

[73] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 217-252.

> mode of existence. The manner in which human sense perception is organized, the medium in which it is accomplished, is determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well.[74]

This process where human senses (in this case, the optics) are affected by respective historical circumstances is precisely mediation. Benjamin observed that, with the help of mass communication and mechanical reproduction, artworks become highly consumable and consequently could be consumed by many; however, not only authenticity, but also affects such as sensuality and excitement that are induced at the sight of an artwork (what Benjamin called "aura") can no longer be traced or produced. According to the underlying logic of Benjamin's argument, it is the newly (re)produced texts (as duplicates and mass production) that upset the aura which could otherwise be seen in the original work. What Kowloon King's writings inform us is, on the contrary, the possibility of intermediation and the potentiality of remediation: Not only that Tsang's street-writing reminds us of the indispensable role of the medium of writing, but also their agencies and their abilities to invent meanings and cast impacts on the presence of one another. In this case, Tsang the person, Tsang's writings, things that he wrote on and with, places where Tsang's writings are/were located are all agencies that generate and renew meanings in the presence of one another through endless mediation and remediation. Different from Benjamin's way of seeing the unidirectional progression of history and time, remediation is not bounded by temporal linearity and irreversibility on the level of interpretation. In other words, newly produced texts can alter or add meanings to earlier texts, and vice versa—reciprocity is precisely what I endeavoured to argue for localnesses in the beginning of this chapter.

With the attention to everyday objects, the significance of the medium is also discussed by Susan Stewart in the book *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. In one example, Stewart raises concern on the overlooked relationship between a book and its content:

> the book's minute description of the material world is a device which tends to draw attention to the book as

[74] Ibid., 222.

object.[75]

Hence, the boundary between the tangible (e.g. the book) and the intangible (e.g. the book's content in the form of ideas, meanings, and knowledge) is also blurred: "writing can be displayed as both object and knowledge."[76] Similarly, a parallel reading can be struck on Tsang's writings and his media of writings—ranging from the countable things and surfaces he wrote on, to the uncountable places/spaces he created by his writings (which can even include the city as a whole as Tsang's "empire"). In this regard, the material and the immaterial are indeed contained within one another (i.e. the concept of "malleable materiality" I proposed in Chapter 1). When Kowloon King and his writings earn recognition as representative local cultural icons in the late 1990s and in the postmillennial era, the material qualities of the agencies involved (things, places, and bodies)—by conceiving Hong Kong's local and letting it be perceived—are also transmitted to the Hong Kong localness manifested by Kowloon King and in his writings. This material malleability that is inherently possessed by Hong Kong localnesses provides not just multiple entry points to examine how Hong Kong's local can be varyingly conceived and perceived, but also rhizomatic vantage points to keep the topic open and its plurality intact.

Crystallization and Sedimentation

Although Tsang had been treated as a nuisance by the British Hong Kong government (and later the Hong Kong SAR government), satirized by the media in the 1980s and the 1990s, and largely dismissed by the majority of the population until the late 1990s,[77] Tsang was the first Hong Kong person to be invited to take part in the curated session of the Venice Biennale in 2003, and was described by the organizer as "the oldest graffiti artist in the world."[78] In the same year, *South China Morning Post*

[75] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 29.
[76] Ibid., 35.
[77] Despite this, Tsang only came to receive his first levy in 1995 after carrying out his street-writing activities for decades. At that time, he was fined HKD50.
[78] The exhibition describes Tsang as follows: "Tsang Tsou-choi is probably the oldest graffiti artist in the world. He writes Chinese characters on public installations all over Hong Kong. He proclaims himself "King of Kowloon" and has been arrested many times. His works have become an identity of Hong Kong culture." The text of the exhibition is recorded in:
"Z.O.U. - Zone of Urgency: Tsang Tsou-choi," 50th Venice Biennial Report by Universes in Universe, accessed October 10, 2016, http://universes-in-universe.de/car/venezia/bien50/zou/e-tsou-choi.htm.

published an article titled "25 Reasons to Love Hong Kong," where Kowloon King's street writing was listed alongside Jackie Chan, Bruce Lee, and egg tart.[79] Contrasting to this is a news article released by the same newspaper some thirty years ago where it was reported that "detectives last night arrested a man believed to be the self proclaimed 'King of Kowloon.'"[80] Although the article published in 2003 pertains a rather superficial touristic gaze at the city and its beings, being named one of "the very local things every tourist should know about" somehow recognizes the local edge of Tsang and simultaneously proves Tsang to be a manifestation of Hong Kong localness, after decades of street-writing activities in Hong Kong.

Following the first phase of remediation with the material components such as the medium of writing and others, cultural remediation comes in as a second phase of this process, as Tsang's creation and at times the photographic images of his writings —together with Tsang the persons, and the things and the places that hold his writings—enter the cultural circuit for circulation, interpretation, and further re-presentation to take place. The first exhibition of Tsang's works was held at Hong Kong's Goethe-Institut in April 1997, approximately three months before the handover of the sovereignty of the city. While the art critic Lau Kin-wai, one of the organizers of this exhibition, was not the only one who had an eye to the Tsang-styled calligraphy (Lau mentioned his real-life encounter with Tsang in a newspaper column as early as in 1992), fashion designer William Tat-chi Tang in the same eventful year also found inspiration from Tsang and had his writings incorporated into his design. From then on, Tsang's writings gain more and more attention in Hong Kong and abroad. In 2004, the auction house Sotheby's sold Tsang Tsou-choi's work for the first time at a price of HKD 55,000 (which was four times of the estimated price). Among all Tsang's works that had so far been auctioned at Sotheby's, a utility box with Tsang's calligraphy was sold in the highest amount of HKD 800,000 in 2015.[81] Nonetheless, Tsang told the magazine *COLORS* in 2005 that he did not want any

[79] "25 Reasons to Love Hong Kong," *South China Morning Post*, September 29, 2003, http://www.scmp.com/article/429508/25-reasons-love-hong-kong

[80] "'Kowloon King' suspect arrested," *South China Morning Post*, May 26, 1971.

[81] Three works by Tsang were included in this Ullens Collection auctioned at Sotheby's in 2015. According to the record of Sotheby's, this utility box was exhibited in Beijing in 2002 and in Paris in 2008. More details can be found under: http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/the-ullens-collection-experimentation-and-evolution/lot.142.html

money and he just wanted to have his throne back.[82]

Year	Name of Exhibition	Organizers/ Curators	Place of Exhibition
1997	Tsang Tsou-choi Street Calligraphy Exhibition	Kin-wai Lau; Goethe-Institut; Hong Kong Arts Centre	Hong Kong
1997-2000	Cities on the Move		New York; London; Denmark etc.
1999-2002	Power of the Word	Independent Curators International	Taiwan; the United States
2003	Z.O.U: Zone of Urgency	50th Venice Biennale	Venice, Italy
2008	King of Kowloon's Street Calligraphy Exhibition	Telford Plaza	Hong Kong
2008	HK Creativity – Intellectual Property in Hong Kong	World Intellectual Property Organization	Geneva, Switzerland
2011	Memories of King Kowloon	ArtisTree (Swire Properties)	Hong Kong
2012	King of Kowloon	Saamlung Gallery	Hong Kong
2014	Advance through Retreat	Rockbund Art Museum	Shanghai, China

Table 2.2 A list of public exhibitions* where Tsang's works or the photographic images of his works were displayed
(* Exhibitions organized by Sotheby's in Hong Kong and abroad are not included.)

Apart from the actual exhibition and circulation of Tsang's works in museum and gallery contexts, Tsang the person, his acts of writing, and his writings also find their way to the cultural scene by taking part in cultural representation, mediation and interpretation. As early as in 1977, a character named Tsang A-choi 曾阿財 appeared in the television drama *The Odd Ones* 畸人列傳, which was produced by Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB), a free-to-air, wireless commercial television channel in Hong Kong. This character, who was perceived by many as a caricature of Tsang

[82] See Tsang's quote in the beginning of the chapter.
COLORS 65: Freedom of Speech, 2005, accessed October 10, 2016, http://sites.colorsmagazine.com/65/06.php.

Tsou-choi, made his return to the television screen in 1983 under the same name. In the first episode of another TVB drama called *The Adventures of the Woman Reporter* 無冕天使, the character Tsang A-choi, then portrayed by the actor Lau Kong, was a man who proclaimed himself king on the streets of Hong Kong. Later on, Tsang Tsou-choi, the real person, came to make his own appearance on the silver screen. In 2000, Tsang took part in Clarence Yiu-leung Fok's *Queen of Kowloon* 九龍皇后 (2000), where he played his usual self—Tsang was filmed writing on an electricity box on the street as the female protagonist Ah Sei (played by Deanie Tak-han Ip) passed by. Despite the lack of connection to the storyline of the film, Tsang's writing can be seen in the film poster, while the name of the film also makes allusions to Tsang's royal title. In the same year, Tsang appears in Riley Kam-Hung Yip's *Lavender* 薰衣草 (2000), a film that tells a romantic relationship between a young woman and a wounded angel in urban Hong Kong. What is equally intriguing in both films is the intentional casting of Tsang, even though Tsang apparently has no immediate connection to the plot nor to any character of the films. If a connection has to be constructed here, Tsang in the first film acts as a parallel figure to the protagonist Ah Sei, who leads a bitter life living as the (illegitimate) second "wife" (but more like a maid) of an old, poverty-stricken Chinese medical doctor—to make matters worse, she lives under the same roof with her husband, her husband's legitimate first wife, and their daughter in an unnamed public housing estate located on the Kowloon side of Hong Kong. While it is never mentioned in the film, the film title "Queen of Kowloon" can refer to no one but Ah Sei, who dedicates her everyday life and all her energy in taking care of her "family" wherein her existence is only recognized by her "husband." With an eye to the recurrent melodramatic events ranging from the car accident that claims the lives of Ah Sei's husband and his wife, the accident that severely injures Ah Sei's pseudo-son-in-law, to the ignorance and dismissal Ah Sei constantly received from the first wife, the daughter and the pseudo-grand-daughter in the film, all these hardships and the lack of support endured by Ah Sei ironically make her "queen." The enormous contrast between Ah Sei and the image of a "queen" that is conventionally connoted to power, glamour, and status seems to suggest the glory of the (ultra)ordinary (as a genuine heroine) in the mundane everyday life. Meanwhile, this cinematic recontextualization of "Kowloon

King" through the fictional persona Ah Sei (now as a/the "Queen of Kowloon"[83]) offers an opportunity to reread Tsang Tsou-choi's presence in the city—not just as one of the many largely neglected, anonymous individuals struggling in the urban jungle (like Ah Sei), but simultaneously as the extraordinary "Kowloon King" who leads an exceptional way of reconstructing one's own identity in this highly capitalistic city under colonialism and beyond.

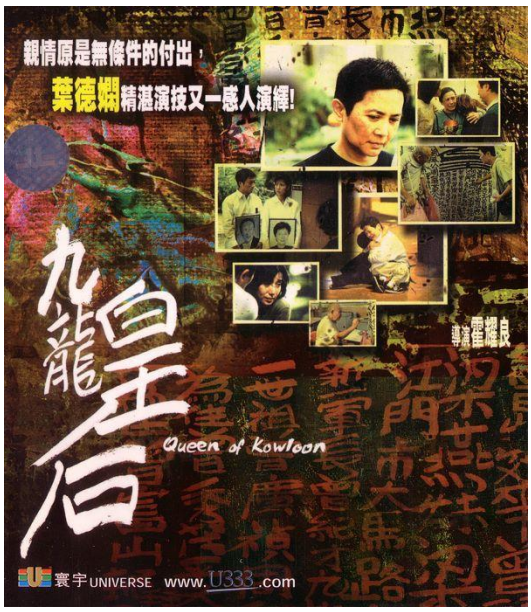

Fig. 2.2 The film poster of *Queen of Kowloon* with the use of Tsang Tsou-choi's writing in the background. Tsang also appeared with Ah Sei (Deanie Yip) in one of the thumbnails on the poster.

To one's surprise, this remediation of Tsang and his writings is echoed in the romantic film *Lavender*, despite human relationships and the overall atmosphere being rendered in a totally different way from the melodramatic *Queen of Kowloon* (not to mention the fantastical dimension in *Lavender* where a human-ultra-human relationship is imagined). Squatting in a corner of a flyover that connects the Central-Mid-Levels escalators together, Tsang Tsou-choi encounters the wounded angel (played by Takeshi Kaneshiro) who has an appearance of an attractive young man and needs "love" to survive in the human world, and a young woman called Athena

[83] The film title in English, "Queen of Kowloon," does not suggest any singular or plural form. The possibility of having other "queens" or "kings" in Kowloon is open for interpretation. A similar question concerning the use of singular and plural forms is also raised in Chapter 1.

(played by Kelly Chen) who has been pain stricken by the death of her boyfriend and has thereafter become cold and distant to human relationships. In this scene, the angel and Athena are caught in the middle of an argument, as Athena mistakenly sees what the angel has previously said as a challenge to her inability to love ("only people with no love will go to hell," says the angel). While sighting Tsang with a white cloth filled with his iconic writings behind him, the angel asks Athena to prove herself ("then give him some," says the angel). The camera, now shooting from the back of Tsang, comes to observe the two protagonists from below. Following the camera eye (i.e. from Tsang's point of view), the audience sees Athena, standing, taking several banknotes from her handbag and handing them down to the squatting Tsang—this is, however, interrupted by the angel, as he tells Athena that "he [Tsang] needs love, not money." As the camera switches back to the eye level of the angel and Athena by producing a medium close-up of the two carrying on with their conversation, the angel explains to Athena that the man (Tsang, but without naming him so) was indeed his "friend" from heaven who had flown into a lightning rod and, in consequence, fell down to the human world. While the angel's interpretation of the proof of love in this case is a kiss, Athena responds with a kick against the angel's leg, after the camera shows Tsang's toothless grin from below. Athena's disgust from the idea of giving Tsang a kiss (as an act of love, rather than giving money) and the angel's identification with Tsang as a fellow wounded heavenly creature thereby demonstrate—for a second time—another multi-faceted (re)reading of Kowloon King that oscillates between the ordinary and the extraordinary.

Last but not least, also in the same year, Tsang sarcastically appeared in a television commercial for the brand Swipe that is specialized in household cleaning products. In my opinion, the sarcasm is not only played on a superficial level where Tsang is seen writing as well as cleaning his own calligraphy on the streets of the city in the commercial; but a high degree of (self-)reflexivity is also present on a deeper level—as it is revealed by Tsang's own voiceover in the commercial, his repeated acts of writing over the years always go hand in hand with the government's repeated cleaning-up of his works (be it the British Hong Kong government or the HKSAR government). In his accented Cantonese and broken sentences with irregular pauses, Tsang carries on with his speech, yet the second part of his voice-over is presumably

scripted so as to deliver the message of the brand in this commercial:

> It can clean Sau Mau Ping; it can clean Choi Hung Estate; it can also clean Tsui Ping Estate! It cleans the kitchen, it cleans the toilet [...] with Swipe, your house can stay clean no matter how big it is. Your house couldn't be as big as mine, I suppose? (my translation)

In no coincidence, Sau Ming Ping, Choi Hung Estate, and Tsui Ping Estate are specific places that are often visited by Tsang and mentioned in his writings as the dwellings of his royal family. In addition to the surface meaning that solicits the advertising purpose of the commercial, how Tsang is represented visually as well as audibly offers new insights in a rereading of Tsang and the process of his transformation into a local icon of Hong Kong. Firstly, the commercial is, among all these aforementioned representations, the only one that gives a voice to Tsang—although the second part of Tsang's speech is largely scripted, Tsang's voice is returned to him as he inaugurates the commercial by recounting his street writing experience in the city. Secondly, the commercial reinvents the relationship between Tsang and the city space, and hence results in a new way of reading Tsang (as a rereading): Furniture such as table and sofa, housewares such as chopsticks and mug, and household electric appliances like television and refrigerator are placed in open areas where these homely things are juxtaposed with a bridge, a pillar of a highway, an electricity box, and other things that can only be found outside the household context. While Tsang covers all these homely and unhomely things impartially with his ink writings, their simultaneous placement with Tsang in open areas, bracketed by the presence of these urban structures that Tsang writes on, problematizes the so-called public and private space in the city. As it is made explicit at the end of the commercial, the rhetorical question raised by Tsang "your house could not be as big as mine, I suppose?" suggests a democratization of the urban space where the spatial and social relationships among things, places and bodies undergo transformation and are hence reordered: in one exemplar, Hong Kong as a whole is now understood as Tsang's home. This reshuffling of space is not only correlated to the aim of the commercial in promoting *household* cleaning products; the creation of Tsang's home,

or the acknowledgement of Kowloon King's territory also innovatively grants legitimacy to Tsang's acts of street-writing in the city, which has been penalized by the British Hong Kong government (and later on the Hong Kong SAR government) as acts of vandalism, and once dismissed by many of his fellow citizens in the city. Thirdly, the presence of other highly recognisable local things and places alongside with Tsang in the commercial intensifies the equation made between Tsang and the Hong Kong localness he comes to represent. In the last scene of the commercial, Tsang is seen seated in his 'throne,' a golden-coloured, single-seater couch. Wearing a golden, silky jacket on top of his own clothes with an eye-catching, purplish scarf under his collar, Tsang's kingly presence is not only suggested by the dramatic outfits imposed on him, but also the luxurious Peninsula Hotel in the backdrop. Located in Tsim Sha Tsui of the Kowloon Peninsula, the colonial-styled Peninsula Hotel was founded in 1928 and has been known for its glamorous characteristics and high-end qualities ever since. Despite its well-known image of extravagance and luxury in real life, as well as in representations, the hotel not only stands witness to, but also takes part in several historical events that left a mark in the development of the city: for instance, the then-British governor of Hong Kong Mark Aitchison Young was grounded by the Japanese army in the hotel, after his voluntary surrender during the Second World War; the hotel once served as a place for enjoyment that was exclusive for the Japanese during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong; however the current appearance of the hotel, i.e. what is seen in the commercial, is a result of the expansion work undertaken in 1994 where a 30-storey tower was built in the existing site, signifying the continuous modernization of the city and its embrace of (neo)liberalist ideals. The juxtaposition of the hotel and Kowloon King in the commercial certainly yields to a myriad of interpretations: While one can easily ponder on the negotiation of the public/private space proposed earlier, one might also come to observe the unconformable features carried by the landmark hotel and the legendary Tsang respectively that characterize different facets of Hong Kong's local at the same time. Last but not least, Tsang's 'cross-over' costumes in the commercial, which adhere neither to a "Westernized" nor a "Chinese" style, with each category being an imagination to different extents, also reveals that his unique kingly presence in Hong Kong and the 'undefined' local he embodied have indeed long been serving

as an alternative to the static location of Hong Kong provided by the authorities before and after 1997. By examining all these representations and their circulation, Tsang Tsou-choi, or the Kowloon King as he proclaimed himself, is seen step-by-step enthroned not only as a unique cultural icon that represents Hong Kong, but also a bearer of Hong Kong's localness over time.

Fig.2.3 The last scene of the Swipe commercial (2000): Tsang sitting on his 'throne' in front of the Peninsula Hotel.

In retrospect, all these texts, be it television drama, film, or commercial, help to document the physical presence of Tsang and his works that would ultimately cease to exist at some point, and hence enable Tsang and his writings to acquire a certain degree of malleable materiality that would allow them to propagate in the world of texts, and to be remediated over time with other texts and in other contexts (for instance, after Tsang passed away in 2007). What has been discussed so far reveals how Tsang and his works enter the cultural circuit, upon their direct circulation in everyday life and, to complicate this, the circulation of their various representations and mediated presences on different levels. In many of these instances, this oversees the gradual transformation of Tsang into a local cultural icon and the valorization of his writings into cultural objects of significance where localness is inscribed and simultaneously manifested—this is what I call the process of sedimentation where the significance of Tsang and his works come to be crystallized over time.

In postmillennial Hong Kong, Kowloon King harvests the recognition he amasses from the proven result of this process of sedimentation as a local icon that represents Hong Kong. To name but a few examples, Tsang Tsou-choi is more than

once borrowed in *East Wing, West Wing* 東宮西宮, a political satire which is created by cultural workers Mathias Woo and Edward Lam, and produced by a Hong Kong-based theatrical group Zuni Icosahedron. From 2003 to 2015, a total of twelve instalments are produced in the series, with common interests in examining the development of local political culture and reviewing local events of the past year. In the inaugurating instalment *2046 CE Bye Bye* (2003), Hong Kong in the year 2046 is imagined to be ruled by Kowloon King Tsang Tsou-choi. "Tsang Tsou-choi" as a character in this series does not possess much liaison to what was previously discussed concerning Tsang the person and his works, as the character—by borrowing Tsang's name and hence his fame as a recognisable local figure—has a largely arbitrary presence in the play, where any logical or causal explanation to this can be left unmentioned due to the eccentric image possessed by Tsang Tsou-choi in real life. In the fourth instalment *West Kowloon Side Story* (2005), the then-Financial Secretary of Hong Kong, Donald Tsang, is nicknamed to be the West Kowloon King, a relative of Kowloon King Tsang Tsou-choi, as a reference to the West Kowloon development project that Donald Tsang was at the time directing.

Chet Lam's song *The Ballad of Kowloon King*, released in 2008, talks about the activities of Tsang Tsou-choi in the city, just as the title of the song suggests. In contrast to Tsang's image as a nuisance under the gaze of high culture and social norms regulated by the power authority, Tsang's presence in the city is very much welcomed and appreciated by Lam, who is known as an independent singer and a creative songwriter. With the repeated line "wandering around with both sleeves flowing in the breeze" (清風兩袖悠然自在到處走) in the lyrics, Tsang's image in the song comes close to that of a flâneur in Walter Benjamin's sense of the word and with reference to his notable reading of Baudelaire the person and his poetry.[84] To this extent, Tsang cannot escape but is inevitably romanticized in the song. For instance, the lines

> Fook-choi is always there
> Never gone missing, the companionship of the Queen

[84] Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A lyric poet in the era of high capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Verso, 1997).

lasts forever[85]

suggests the inseparable relationship between Kowloon King and his "queen" Fook-choi; however, this is only accurate when the content of Tsang's writings is taken into consideration—in reality, Tsang had been living alone for long until he was relocated to a retirement home. Despite this, the romantic association made by Lam towards Tsang, his royal title and his once frantic, now poetic activities in the city is certainly a proof to the elevation of Tsang's image which is achieved by and simultaneously induces rereadings. In the process of remediation, Tsang is also reconfigured with other things, places, and bodies in the city. As Lam sings to us in this (folk)song he composes for Kowloon King:

> Splashing his royal brush on walls, electricity boxes,
> lamp posts in the urban city, and—
> Writing epics, [he is] the greatest in Hong Kong and
> Kowloon.[86]

This is, however, not the only eulogy that Kowloon King receives in postmillennial Hong Kong.

Beyond the scope of popular culture, Tsang was openly praised by Lee Chuek-yan, the general secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, for being a representative figure of Hong Kong's "local grassroots." In running for the 2004 Legislative Council election, Lee especially invited Tsang to write slogans like "democracy," "fifty years of unchange," "support minimum wage," and "power to the people" for his election campaign. Used in promotion materials and printed on tee-shirts, these phrases not only denote—on the level of content—Lee's aspiration in raising political awareness in Hong Kong; but the widely recognisable writing of Kowloon King—now as things for appreciation—is also connoted to a Hong Kong localness that Lee aims to convey in his campaign. In 2005, the legend of Kowloon King was narrated as a feature story in the radio programme *Hong Kong Phonograph*

[85] The original lyrics give: 永遠有福彩/ 皇后長伴直到永久/ 從無遺漏。
Man Fook-choi 文福彩 (sometimes, Leung Fook-choi 梁福彩) is Tsang's wife whom he married in the 1950s. Her name is mentioned several times in Tsang's writings, as it is Tsang's habit to comprehensively list out his family genealogy.
[86] The original lyrics in Chinese are: 鬧市內揮御筆牆壁電箱燈柱/ 記載史詩港九最強。

produced by Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK).[87] The programme, hosted by Ng Ho and Cheng Kai-ming, aims to recount stories and personal experiences collected from the 1970s onward that constitute different facets of Hong Kong memories. What lies behind these operations is indeed the relation formed between Kowloon King and Hong Kong's local, where Tsang and his writings become commonly understood by many in postmillennial Hong Kong as representations of Hong Kong localness—this is especially prominent when the local community repeatedly calls for the preservation of Tsang's works after his death in 2007. Be it in random street interviews conducted by newspapers, articles written by journalists, or speeches made by different individuals about Kowloon King, Tsang the person, his acts of writing, and his calligraphy are in many cases perceived as an essential part of Hong Kong people's collective memories.[88] On March 28, 2009, a collective action named "Save Kowloon Emperor's Last Street Calligraphy Demonstration" took place in Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier where a piece of Tsang's writing was found on a pillar but was left unprotected. The action managed to put enough pressure on the Hong Kong SAR government that a plastic shield was later on installed to protect the particular pillar a few months later. Since the government did not take further action to preserve other works of Tsang in town, lawmaker Tanya Chan deemed it necessary to question the government's attitude towards Tsang's few remaining works in the city.[89] Despite the government's negligence towards Tsang's cultural

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[87] "Pager/ Kowloon King," *Hong Kong Phonograph* 香港留聲機, Radio and Television Hong Kong, November 24, 2005, accessed October 10, 2016, http://app4.rthk.hk/special/rthkmemory/details/hk-footprints/292.

[88] "Qunian chengnuo baohu, jinri zhuyi qingxi, Zeng zaocai mobao zao zhengfu pohuai" 去年承諾保護, 近日逐一清洗　曾灶財墨寶遭政府破壞 [Promised to preserve, government erased Tsang Tsou-choi's calligraphy], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, September 19, 2008, accessed March 8, 2017, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20080919/11619136,
In a street interview, a primary school teacher told the newspaper that he often saw Tsang doing street-writing when he grew up in Kwun Tong. He believed that "the ink writing of Kowloon King is the collective memory of Hong Kong people." Art critics Lau Wai-kin who organized the first solo exhibition of Tsang's writings in Hong Kong in 1997 also revealed his worries and frustration towards the government's inadequate effort in conserving the street-writing of Tsang.
See, "Zeng Zaocai mobao you bei hui, wenhua jie hong zhengfu, zhengfu 'baohu' cuoshi: paizhao cundang" 曾灶財墨寶又被毀　文化界轟政府　政府「保護」措施：拍照存檔 [Tsang Tsou-choi's calligraphy destroyed, Government to blame], *Mingpao Daily* 明報, November 19, 2009.
In the context of the Legislative Council, lawmaker Tanya Chan also reiterated in her speech delivered in 2010 that Tsang's calligraphy is "part of the collective memory of many Hong Kong people."

[89] "Mr Tsang Tsou-choi's ink writing," Information Services Department of the HKSAR Government, January 13, 2010, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201001/13/P201001130222.htm

significance and influence on the local population, Tsang and his works start to earn proper regard as something worthy of documentation in formal contexts and occasions. In 2010, Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK) dedicates an episode titled "No King in Kowloon" to account for the legacy of Kowloon King in the television programme *Hong Kong Stories*.[90] In 2011, Tsang was enlisted as one of the one hundred figures that are considered to represent and influence Hong Kong the most in the informative program *Hong Kong 100 VIPs*, produced by Asia Television channel (ATV). In this extensive series with one hundred and one episodes, each episode—which lasts no more than thirty minutes—is made up of past interviews, footages and news clippings of the figure concerned. Although there is no ranking and no special implication according to the order of appearance, Tsang—appeared in the seventh episode of this extensive series—happened to be sandwiched by Charles Kuen Kao, the Nobel Prize winner in Physics, and the prestigious family of Chow Shou-son that held important positions in Hong Kong under British colonialism. More recently, in 2015, Kowloon King and his works become "permanently" available and accessible in an online exhibition collaborated by Google Cultural Institute and the Hong Kong-based Art Research Institute.[91]

From a nuisance to a subculture, then to a manifested form of Hong Kong localness and a part of Hong Kong people's collective memories, Tsang, his act of street-writing, and his calligraphy are varyingly perceived with respect to ongoing representation, mediation, and interpretation. The process of sedimentation hitherto demonstrates how a certain form of Hong Kong localness can be crystallized over time and through a certain constellation of things, places, and bodies. With reference to all these, local/translocal and colonialism/postcoloniality can thereafter be given a new look (i.e. rereading).

Rereading Local and Translocal

Ackbar Abbas's discussion of "new localism" can be found in his seminal book *Hong Kong Culture: The Politics of Disappearance*, where new localism is identified in the

[90] "No King in Kowloon," *Hong Kong Stories,* Radio and Television Hong Kong, December 19, 2010.
[91] "King of Kowloon: The Life and Art of Tsang Tsou-choi," Google Cultural Institute and Art Research Institute, Hong Kong, https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/u/0/exhibit/king-of-kowloon-the-life-and-art-of-tsang-tsou-choi/_wLyH4_4OwhUIA.

context of "New Hong Kong Cinema," a collective term Abbas assigns to describe the "Hong Kong New Wave" and the "Second Wave." Seen by many as a milestone in the development of Hong Kong culture, the Hong Kong New Wave was orchestrated by the concerted efforts of young talents, where new ideas, energy, and orientations were injected to rejuvenate the cultural industry of Hong Kong during the late 1970s and the 1980s.[92] Notable directors such as Yim Ho, Tsui Hark, Ann Hui, and Patrick Tam all played a key role in this unplanned, experimental cultural movement, where different facets of Hong Kong identity were explored, and alternative representations of Hong Kong were initiated with new sensibilities and often a social overtone. In this wave of cultural movement, social concerns were shed on the plights of the underprivileged such as Vietnamese refugees and boat people; while social problems in connection to poverty, juvenile delinquency, antisocial behaviour, and violence were also exposed and discussed. To this end, Cheuk Pak-tong describes Hong Kong New Wave Cinema as a manifestation of local consciousness as well as a completion of "the work of localization" in Hong Kong on the linguistic, the cultural, and the social levels.[93] With the transition from the 1980s to the 1990s, film scholar Stephen Teo observes the rise of a second wave, with regard to the cinematic works produced by directors such as Stanley Kwan, Wong Kar-wai, and Clara Law. In particular, one theme that can be commonly found in the Second Wave is the concern, be it conscious or unconscious, towards Hong Kong's future in view of the handover in 1997. Wong Kar-wai's *Days of Being Wild* (1990) is, for instance, interpreted as depicting "lost youths as an allegory for the plight of Hong Kong people as they prepare for the transition to 1997."[94] By examining the Hong Kong New Wave and the Second Wave as the *New Hong Kong Cinema* as a whole, Ackbar Abbas connects the representations (of Hong Kong) produced in this period of time to his oft-quoted notion of "disappearance" in addressing the condition of Hong Kong culture in face of 1997. In view of these sensibilities, Abbas contends that "new localism" is a feature of the New Hong Kong Cinema, and it is "new" in a way that it "investigates the dislocations of the local, where the local is something unstable that mutates right in

[92] Pak-tong Cheuk, *Hong Kong New Wave Cinema 1978-2000* (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), 9-11.
The book presents individual studies of six key directors of Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, namely Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, Allen Fong, Tsui Hark, Yim Ho, and Alex Cheung Kwok-ming.
[93] Ibid., 14-15.
[94] Stephen Teo, *Hong Kong Cinema: Extra Dimension* (London: BFI, 1997), 5, 184.

front of our eyes."[95] In the case of Hong Kong cinema, Abbas defines the preceding form of localness as "an ethos of exclusion" that "defined a narrow homogenous social space where foreigners and foreign elements had no place,"[96] whereas the "new" local emerged in the dawn of the new Hong Kong cinema is interpreted by him as something hybrid, something ephemeral, thus turning Hong Kong into a hybrid space that is simultaneously local and translocal.

With an eye to Abbas' discussion, local can be, on the one hand, understood as a palimpsest where different interpretations generate and are generated by, for instance, varying manifestations of Hong Kong's local (i.e. localnesses); on the other hand, a translocal dimension in understanding Hong Kong's local as something hybrid and pluralistic is seemingly often present. This is, for instance, the case concerning the international circulation and popularity enjoyed by Hong Kong Cinema in the 1980s and the 1990s when Hong Kong's local is widely popularized and recognized abroad; Hong Kong Cantonese—by constantly adapting and fusing sounds and vocabularies from other languages such as English and Mandarin—is read by Abbas as another exemplar of the hybrid nature of Hong Kong culture. Last but not least, the international attention gained by Kowloon King—as someone who is deemed a representative of Hong Kong localness and is glorified by the international media because of the localness he embodies—precisely proves the various translocal positionings where Hong Kong's local is varyingly conceived, perceived, and located.[97]

Rereading Colonialism and the Condition of Postcoloniality

While the previous chapter raised questions on the exhibition "The Hong Kong Story" of the Hong Kong Museum of History, rewriting one's family genealogy against the wider backdrop of world history—as the sole subject matter Tsang had engaged for half a century in his street-writing—provides a space not just to follow up with this

[95] Ackbar Abbas, *Hong Kong Culture and the Politics of Disappearance* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1997), 28.
[96] Ibid.
[97] A further discussion of the translocal can be found in Chapter 6. Different from Abbas in this context, my use of the term "localism" points to the manifestation of local in the political realm. This specific use is to avoid the problem of selective non-partitioning (where meanings are unreflectively borrowed and applied) that was identified earlier in this chapter.

interrogation, but also to re-act to colonialism and the condition of postcoloniality in postmillennial Hong Kong.

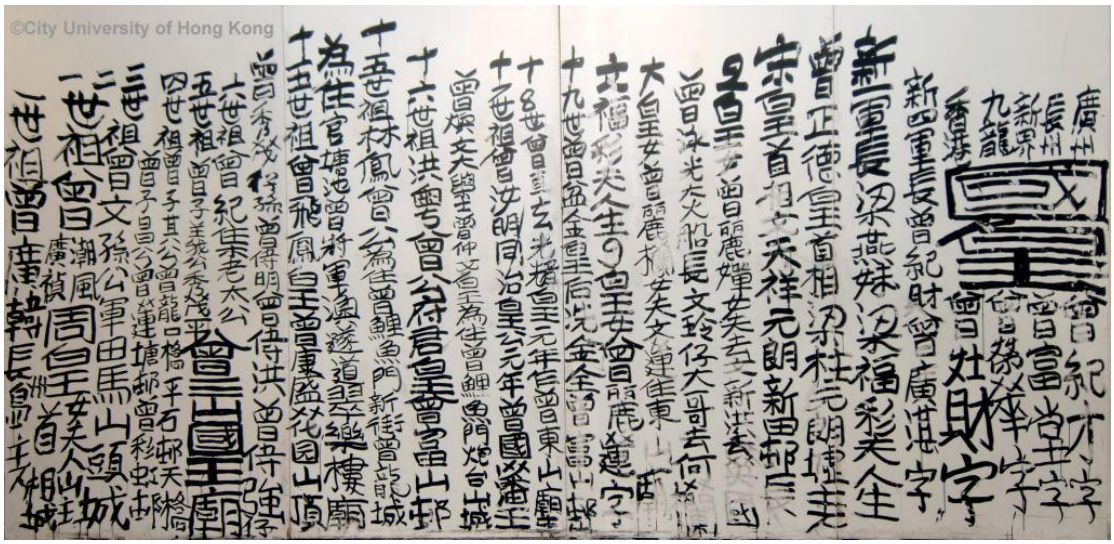

Fig. 2.3 The calligraphy of Tsang Tsou-choi with his family genealogy as a recurrent theme. (Courtesy: City University of Hong Kong)

In his calligraphy, Tsang traces the lineage of his family as descendants of royalty, where the names of his ancestors and his close family members are meticulously accounted in accordance with their respective royal titles, the royal land, and the specific generation they belong to. This family genealogy is, however, composed of both facts and fictions, and this is what makes Tsang's street-writings some "writerly texts" to look at. According to Roland Barthes,

> the writerly text is a perpetual present, upon which no consequent language (which would inevitably make it past) can be superimposed; the writerly text is ourselves writing...[98]

In the case of Tsang, not only the readers, but aforementioned agencies like things, places, and bodies are also located at the sites of meaning production. On the one hand, Tsang's creative process crystallizes his memories and sentiments amassed from his everyday life experiences in colonial and postcolonial Hong Kong in consecutive present moments ("a perpetual present"). On the other hand, Tsang's active re-engagement and re-enactment of the past through his acts of street-writing

[98] Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Cape, 1975), 5.

allows histories to be rewritten and stories to be continuously produced. What is more intriguing in Tsang's reconstruction of his family history is that a number of well-known historical figures are reinvented as the members of Tsang's extended family in this imaginary past: for instance, Song loyalist Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283), and "father of the nation" Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925) are occasionally mentioned in Tsang's writing, while Tsang also believes that his wife—sometimes as Man Fook-choi and at times as Leung Fook-choi—is a descendant of Wen Tianxiang; Lin Zexu 林則徐 (or, sometimes Lin Tse-hsu, 1785-1850), a Chinese official of the Qing dynasty best known for his opposition to the opium trade. Lin is renamed by Tsang as Lin Zecai (i.e. Lam Zak-choi 林則財 in Cantonese), such that Lin and Tsang himself are 'connected' by sharing the same last character in their names. It is also in this context where Tsang mentions actual historical happenings like the cession of Hong Kong and the Kowloon Peninsular, the lease of the New Territories, and the invasion of the Eight-Nation Alliance, alongside with his family history.[99] In addition to this, different locales in Hong Kong that are reckoned by Tsang as territories his family own can also be found in Tsang's writings—from areas like the Peak, districts like Kwun Tong, streets like Fei Ngo Shan Road, housing estates like Ping Shek Estate, to specific locations like Sam Shan Kwok Wong Temple (三山國王廟, literally Three Mountains Emperor Temple). On the one hand, Tsang distributes significances to these locales with respect to their (imaginary) relations to his family; on the other hand, these locales also gain agency by granting not only significance but also identity to Tsang and his family. In all these instances, Tsang therefore constellates a 'new,' local cosmos that situates him and his family, however insignificant by the standard of the grand narrative, in the centre of the map. By injecting his subjectivity into the wider historical backdrop of the world, Tsang demonstrates the rhizomatic, fluid translocal movement of the local; likewise, this act of reterritorializing also makes echoes to Tsang's self-proclaimed royal status and his

[99] The Eight-Nation Alliance was comprised of troops sent from the Empire of Japan, the Russian Empire, the British Empire, the French Third Republic, the United States, the German Empire, the Kingdom of Italy, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. As a military coalition formed by eight nations, it invaded China in 1900.

identity as "Kowloon King."[100] While Tsang had lived most of his life under British colonialism, declaring oneself as king and claiming one's own territory in a colony can then be seen as Tsang's response to British colonialism in Hong Kong.

In many different ways, Tsang's works reflect his aversion to different forms of institutional power: from his disregard for limits and restrictions (his ignorance of the "post no bill" sign in the urban space) to his contempt for authoritative figures such as the Queen of England and ruling or administrative bodies such as the Hong Kong government at different periods of time. Moreover, Tsang's rebellious redeployment of the city space as his own canvas (for instance, how he wrote on government logos and the crown of the British Empire), along with his open attack on the Queen of England and the government ("fight with the Britain," "down with the Queen of England," he wrote) in his writings, is indubitably subversive. By reinstating his family status with a royal heritage, and declaring kingship as a colonized in a land ruled by the colonizer, Tsang daringly destabilizes from below the generally accepted power paradigm between the colonizer and the colonized—as Tsang rewrites his family history in the public space, the way history is produced (by the victors, by the powerful) is also challenged. Moreover, by constructing a kinship to the colonizer but not by being a "collaborator" in Law Wing-sang's term,[101] Tsang also unsettles the taken-for-granted hierarchal relationship and hence invents a new relationship between the establishment and the anti-establishment. Meanwhile, the subversive nature of Tsang and his works does not cease after 1997. For instance, by juxtaposing Donald Tsang alongside Tsang Tsou-choi in the political theatre *East Wing West Wing*, this is only a comic reference to Tsang Tsou-choi's notable habit of liaising those who share the same surname with him, but also to mock Donald Tsang for his political ambition to be "(West Kowloon) king" of Hong Kong. In 2005, Donald Tsang, who had been serving the British Hong Kong government as a civil servant until the 1997 handover, did become the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, yet he still had to satisfy the central government in Beijing. Last but not least, the very symbolic act of reclaiming one's voice (if not land for Tsang) through the use of city

[100] It is never clear whether the title "king" written and imagined by Tsang Tsou-choi denotes royalty under the monarchy system of the "West" or the imperial court of China.

[101] Tsang at times addressed The Queen of England as "Yinhuang dajie" 英皇大姐 (Sis Queen of England), as one of his daughters had moved to the UK after her marriage. This is the kinship Tsang had in mind between the two royal families.

space, the challenge of the grand narrative and other actions precisely speaks to the rise of local consciousness in postmillennial Hong Kong.

Conclusion: Backreading

The discussion on Hong Kong localnesses and Kowloon King delineated in this chapter allows us to take a fresh eye on Ip Iam-chong's article "The Specters of Marginality and Hybridity" in the context of postmillennial Hong Kong. In this article, Ip lays out a very different approach of mapping Hong Kong's identity and culture by slamming the mainstream claims on Hong Kong's "marginality" and "hybridity" in the academia during the 1990s. Ip daringly argues that fixating Hong Kong's position, culture, and identity to buzzwords like the marginal and the hybrid makes no difference from any operation of colonialism—the colonizer is being essentialized, so is the colonised. As Ip reminds us,

> opposition against the monolithic interpretation of colonialism has been the major task of postcolonial criticism. The aim is not to obliterate the superior/subordinate relationship between colonizer and colonized but to reveal different forms of cultural-political power in postcolonial situations, and thus to analyse the power relationship between different colonizers and colonized groups (not to esssentialize regions or peoples).[102]

With this in mind, Pun's analysis of Hong Kong's local is again invoked, such that it can be given a new look.[103] On the first level, three seemingly straightforward but important clues can be extracted from Pun's article as hints to carry on the discussion on localnesses in the context of postmillennial Hong Kong. Pun outlines how Hong Kong's local undergoes transformation against the changing socio-political landscape before and after 1997—Hong Kong localness is never a stable entity, nor can it be defined in a one-off, clear-cut manner. As the first clue, this urges us to switch to "Hong Kong localnesses." Secondly, local is conceived differently, inasmuch as it is

[102] Iam-chong Ip, "The Specters of Marginality and Hybridity," *Chinese Sociology and Anthropology* 30, no. 3 (1998): 60.
[103] Pun, "Ten-year Transformation of 'Local'."

perceived differently over different periods of time: When it encounters contingent social, cultural, and political changes, local—as an unstable entity—is easily subject to contention, resulting in the ambiguity in its meaning and usage. This addresses the impending difficulties in comprehending what local or Hong Kong localness signifies especially in the post-Umbrella Movement era (i.e. the unsettling picture introduced in the beginning of this chapter). The second clue therefore draws our attention to the issue of temporality—as one determining factor in affecting how Hong Kong's local is manifested and understood with differences. Thirdly, while Pun's understanding of "local"—as of the year 2013—corresponds to this temporality where the concept of localness has not yet gone too fuzzy as what was illustrated earlier in this chapter, rereading Pun's analysis in a standpoint anchored to a different time frame, nonetheless, engenders a different interpretation from what Pun has attempted to put in order: What I am demonstrating at the moment—uncovering new insights from Pun's staging of Hong Kong's local by juxtaposing it with observations made in another time frame—is exactly a way of reading as well as meaning production by relating through reciprocity, intermediation and remediation. With regard to the manifold significations of local (e.g. as a description of a certain lifestyle, as identity, etc.), to grasp a better understanding of Hong Kong's local is therefore not to adhere to a single point where only one out of many other meanings is derived, but to make sense of the process of the production of meaning (how local is conceived and perceived). On the one hand, the understanding of local is, one after another, built up on top of its previous versions in a forward-moving manner where a chronological order is inscribed (for instance, local as a lifestyle is regarded as a predecessor to local as an identity). On the other hand, backreading is equally important—when the older version, context and usage of the term are bestowed with new meanings, these renewed interpretations can induce new perspectives in confronting the newer, or current versions of the term (for instance, local lifestyle is remediated by the renewed understanding of local to bear cultural values and meanings, i.e. something performative to demonstrate a local identity). These three features uncovered in this reading exercise—namely the switch to Hong Kong localnesses, temporality as a factor, and reciprocity and remediation—play important roles in building up an alternative way of deciphering Hong Kong localnesses in postmillennial Hong Kong

when colonial, postcolonial, and even neo-colonial experiences mingling across generations of Hong Kong people surface in different forms and by different forces in the city.

Chapter 3 - A Tale of Two Rocks (I):
Sung Wong Toi

"You have obtained the Cession of Hong Kong, a barren island with hardly a house upon it."[104] This contempt was fired by British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston to Captain Elliot who insisted in the potential of Hong Kong in becoming a strategic base for the British Empire, when the Anglo-Chinese Opium War ended with the sining of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. The statement, believed to have spoken for a considerable number of voices in the British government, represented the general dissatisfaction towards the acquisition of Hong Kong.[105] Perhaps Palmerston himself could never have imagined how his naming of the "barren island" (sometimes as "barren rock") would become such an oft-mentioned expression in describing Hong Kong under different contexts and over different agendas across the centuries.[106] In the millennial era, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, for instance, is still keen on attracting tourists' gazes by connecting Hong Kong to this 'miraculous' story of change,

> This vibrant, dynamic city was just a "barren rock" housing a collection of fishing villages when claimed by Britain in 1842 following the First Opium War with China...[107]

This rags-to-riches formula, which is often employed in describing the development of the city, has been discussed in Chapter 1 with an eye to the history of Hong Kong presented in the museum context and various historical writings that are embedded with different ideologies and political orientations. It was subsequently disclosed that typically shared in this Hong Kong story is a liberal modernist framework where contested historical procedures such as imperialism, colonialism, modernization, and even neo-colonialism are elapsed into a story of progress that even a "barren rock"

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[104] Frank Welsch, *A Borrowed Place: The History of Hong Kong* (New York: Kodansha America, 1993), 108.
[105] Steve Tsang, *A Modern History of Hong Kong* (London; New York: I.B. Taurus, 2007), 14.
[106] Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 9.
[107] Hong Kong Tourism Board, "Historic Hong Kong Outing," accessed March 30, 2017, http://www.discoverhongkong.com/cruise/eng/Shore_Excursion_HK_Living_Culture.html.

has a chance to become the "Pearl of the Orient."[108]

In this stereotypical Hong Kong story, the belief that Hong Kong has fully transformed from a barren rock to a modern city of "prosperity and stability" is a perpetuation of the colonial legacy in Hong Kong under British colonialism and even after; its continuation in the master narrative in the post-1997 era hence urges many scholars and critics to uncover neo-colonizing forces such as the (neo)liberal modernist framework that persists in the so-called postcolonial era.[109] To this end, it comes as no surprise that "prosperity and stability" was actually one of the rare consensuses upheld by Britain and China despite their rocky discussion of the settlement of Hong Kong's future in the early 1980s.[110] This emphasis on the

[108] "Pearl of the Orient" 東方之珠 is a pseudonym of Hong Kong that is used not only in tourism promotion, but also as a self-representation in textbooks and on other discursive levels. The image envisioned by the name can be regarded as a recognition, if not glorification, of Hong Kong's 'valuable' status as a developed city. In its cultural reverberations, a Cantonese song titled "Pearl of the Orient" was released in 1982. Sung by by Jenny Tseng 甄妮 (1953-), and written by Cheng Kwok-kong 鄭國江 (1941-), the lyrics refer to Hong Kong as a "*siu dou*" 小島 (small island), and describe it as a home to many. The song is described by Chu Yiu-wai as "an advocacy of a spirit of unity" (*Lost in Transition*, 127). Another song bearing the same title was released in 1985 in two versions. Sharing the same melody that is composed by a Taiwanese singer-songwriter Lo Ta-yu 羅大佑 (1954-), the Cantonese version was performed by Michael Kwan. Its lyrics, written again by Cheng, remind one of the 1982 rendition of the song, where Hong Kong is called a "*siu hoi dou*" 小海島 (little sea island). In the 1985 rendition, Cheng emphasizes that the prosperity Hong Kong enjoys is built up from the hardship endured by different inhabitants of the island over the course of history. The Mandarin version, performed by Lo, has a different set of lyrics. Written by Lo himself, the lyrics present a different gaze on Hong Kong: compared to Cheng's down-to-earth depiction of Hong Kong as an island, Lo expresses his dual appreciation and sympathy to Hong Kong, where the direct image of the island is replaced by a more figurative image of the "*keung kong*" 香江, which literally means fragrance river and is also a poetic name given towards Hong Kong. The 1985 rendition of the song in two versions is often regarded as a response to the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in 1984.

[109] For instance, John Koon-chung Chan provides a well-argued criticism of neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization in the context of Hong Kong before and after 1997. For a "decolonized mind" to be developed, Chan indicates the need to "challenge the neat neo-liberal self-understanding that has purported to explain its past successes," and "the jealously guarded nationalist discourse of an overwhelming sovereign power" at the same time (389). See,
John Koon-chung Chan, "Hong Kong Viscera," *Postcolonial Studies* 10:4 (2007): 379-389, doi: 10.1080/1368879070162139.1.

[110] As an outcome of British Premier Margaret Thatcher's visit to China in September 1982, Britain and China agreed to undertake negotiations of Hong Kong's sovereignty based on "the aim of maintaining prosperity and stability" (2). "The maintenance of the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong" was reiterated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration signed in 1984. "Prosperity and stability" therefore characterizes Hong Kong's asset as a financial and economic success, albeit the underdevelopment of democracy in the city.
See, "Record of a Meeting Between the Prime Minister and Vice Chairman Deng Xiaoping at the Great Hall of the People on Friday 24 September at 10:30am," *Thatcher MSS (Churchill Archive Centre): THCR 1/10/39-2 f52*, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/122696.
"Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong," accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/jd2.htm.

importance of 'prosperity and stability' not only shapes how Hong Kong is (made) perceived before and after 1997; but the 'Hong Kong' that came into shape under British colonial administration is also forced to undergo a 'seamless'-as-successful transition to the post-1997 façade of the city, where this constellation of the barren rock is perpetuated with the maintenance of 'prosperity and stability.'

Under these circumstances, the connections between Hong Kong, specific rocks, and rock in general remain the key to the discussion in this chapter and the next. Over time, other 'meaningful' rocks have been identified in Hong Kong, which itself is a relatively big piece of rock, and acquire different cultural functions and political connotations. During this process, Hong Kong, previously a "barren island," is gradually transformed into a place inhabited by other rocks and other habitants, such that its barrenness finally fades away. By this deconstructivist strategy, some of these other rocks that are identified on Hong Kong also undergo similar processes to become 'meaningful' places. In addition to their rekindled agencies, places and things—oscillating between a rock in general that is readily available in the natural landscape and a specific rock that can be named into a specific place—overlap one another to different extents in processes of representation, interpretation and mediation. The change in nature, or in identity of these inanimate entities is thereby exposed as a matter of "becoming" as well as "being," if one borrows the idea from Stuart Hall's notable theorization of cultural identity.[111] In addition to this, Spivak's postcolonial openness guides us further to rethink and reorder human-nonhuman relations in this case[112]—it is by attributing appearances and agencies to neglected places and things (e.g. the rocks) that their rejuvenated connections with the human counterparts can review and reveal different invisible relationships and latent forces that are at work, where everyday life experiences and processes of cultural production and consumption (e.g. the role played by the rocks in representing Hong Kong and fabricating identities) can be remediated. In this regard, one merit should at least be credited from the exhibition "The Hong Kong Story" in the Hong Kong Museum of History: It is, after all, a Hong Kong story that begins with the natural history of the

[111] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 225.
[112] See Chapter 1, 27.
Spivak, *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet*, 46.

territory where animals, plants, and rocks are concerned before the arrival of mankind—this therefore reminds us that every place is ultimately constituted of things. In other words, to become a place is to make room for things to be accommodated, inasmuch as one should not overlook the agency of things when making sense of a place. In all these instances, Hong Kong as an unpolished rock shall not be treated just as a device of imagery, but the rock—as a mental, figurative concept as well as something that exists in real life—plays an important role in constellating different relations between people and the place it denotes and connotes (i.e. Hong Kong at large in this case) against changing socio-political contexts.

As it is shown, the "barren rock," when aligned with the notion of "prosperity and stability," demonstrates one, nevertheless conventional, way of fabricating 'Hong Kong' which is backed by specific economic principles and political ideologies that are promoted in the master narrative; however, when other constellations of thing, place, and bodies are considered, it is indeed possible, according to the same logic, for a 'Hong Kong story' to "become" something else. As an ultimate goal of these two chapters, different constellations that mark different conceptions and perceptions of Hong Kong's local are to be uncovered. To follow the roles and the trajectories partaken by specific rocks in Hong Kong stories, I examine Sung Wong Toi 宋王臺 in this chapter and Lion Rock in the next, as the two rocks are both widely considered as a local cultural icon and an identity symbol that speak differently to the inhabitants of Hong Kong at different times. As rocks in nature, both Sung Wong Toi and Lion Rock become places that are bestowed with special meanings to the city and its dwellers; meanwhile, as cultural things, the two rocks enjoy different degrees and levels of circulation in texts and beyond over the course of Hong Kong's history. By examining how different interpretations of local and different degrees of localness are disseminated against different socio-political contexts, the oft-undermined intratextual and extratextual relations can also be unfolded between things, places, and different generations of urban dwellers. Paralleled to the Hong Kong-barren rock transformation, these transformative moments mediate and are interwoven into different stories of Hong Kong. As the physical presence and the agencies of the rocks are now taken into consideration, this provides new ground to approach localness through its inextricable connection to local places and things that are genuinely

attached to the territory by geological formation that is beyond any human intervention in the first place.

Every Story Begins with *a* Rock?

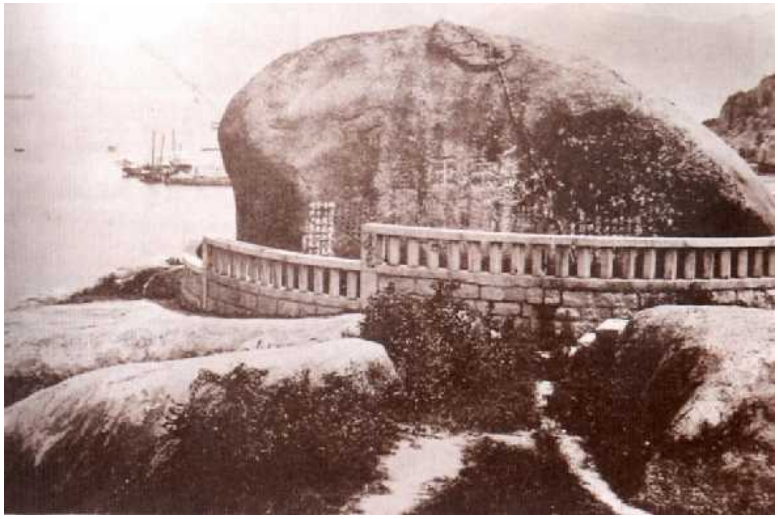

Fig. 3.1 Sung Wong Toi, ca. 1920 (source: Hong Kong Public Library)

Near the old Kai Tak Airport, one can find a quiet secluded park called Sung Wong Toi Garden, which is frequented mainly by residents living in the neighbourhood. It is in this seemingly unnoticeable place where the memorial tablet of Sung Wong Toi is erected. To one's surprise, Sung Wong Toi, literally meaning Song Emperor's Terrace, does not take shape of its current form, nor does it appear in its current location, until the mid-20th Century—quite the contrary, Sung Wong Toi used to be a gigantic natural bolder located for centuries by the sea shore. The significant role of this rock in creating a place with memories and fabricating cultural identities under different contexts of Hong Kong reveals precisely the nonhuman agency at work in everyday life as well as processes of cultural production and consumption.

Before acquiring its name, Sung Wong Toi used to be a rock among many others lying on Sacred Hill 聖山, a hill by the shore, not far away from its current resting place. In the year 1278, the rock witnessed the royal visit of the then Song Emperor Zhao Gang 趙昰 (1269-1278), his brother Zhao Bing 趙昺 (1272-1279), and their loyalists-follower from the Song imperial court. The visit was, however, nothing celebratory, but an escape to flee from the attack of the Mongolian army. The trip ended tragically, eventually costing the lives of the two young successors of the

Song's court: Zhao Gang died of illness in the same year after arriving in Hong Kong, while Zhao Bing, at the age of 9, a year after he was enthroned upon the death of his brother, jumped into the sea with loyalist Lu Xiufu 陸秀夫 (1236-1279).[113] This particular rock is thereby remembered as the last remaining part of the Song's territory where the two Song emperors had once stood before the total collapse of the empire.

The name of this rock, widely known today as Sung Wong Toi, comes from the engraving found on its surface. It is believed that after the fall of the Song dynasty and during the Mongolian reign of the Yuan dynasty, some Song loyalists had the rock engraved to commemorate the brief refuge taken by the last Song Emperors in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the historical legacy of Sung Wong Toi is built up by different colourful, quasi-historical, quasi-fictional stories: Upon the arrival of the Mongolian army, the rock was, for instance, depicted to have split itself open for the Song emperor to hide away from the sight of his enemy.[114] Different connotations are also embedded in the different portrayals of the death of Zhao Bing as an accident, a (forced) suicide, and a martyrdom. Regardless of how the story is told and retold, the agency of the rock remains significant in all these instances. For the first time to get involved in human history, the rock preliminarily reveals one constellation that connects itself that would later become Sung Wong Toi, the time-space where the event took place, and the human participants. To take off from this, the rock would be circulated and re-created in the processes of cultural production and consumption by a group of émigré-literati in the late 19th century and the early 20th century; in the post-1997 context, the rock would be frequently recalled, for instance, in arguments that aim to claim the existence of Hong Kong's precolonial history and sometimes even to prove the precolonial connection between Hong Kong and imperial China.[115] With its manifold appearances and its various degrees of connection with the Song emperors, the émigré-literati, among others, Sung Wong Toi as a rock, as well as a place,

[113] The history of Sung Wong Toi is recorded in a bilingual epigraph erected in the Sung Wong Toi Garden by the British Hong Kong Government in 1959.
[114] This piece of history is rendered into a story with a mythical nature, for instance, in a reference book for liberal studies in the secondary school curriculum of Hong Kong. See,
Ka-leung Wong 黃家樑, *Cangzai guji li de Xianggang* 藏在古蹟裡的香港 [Hong Kong: Shrouded in History] (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2014), 128.
[115] See the discussion of Hong Kong historiography in Chapter 1, 3-5; and of *Ta Kung Pao*'s attempt to deflect Hong Kong's local in Chapter 2, 27-28.

translates and manifests different positionings into relations, and vice versa, where personal experiences, historical legacies, and identity politics are found entangled with one another across different time-spaces of Hong Kong.

A Cosmos of Humans, Rocks, and Others

In Hon Tze-ki's essay "A Rock, A Text and A Tablet," the transformation undertaken by Sung Wong Toi into Pierre Nora's "*lieu de memoire*" is detailed with respect to three historical periods, namely the Chinese Xinhai Revolution in 1911 (where the overthrowing of the Qing Dynasty brought an end to imperial China), the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949 (where the civil war of China ended with the Communist Party establishing their political regime People's Republic of China in continental China and the National Party relocating the Republic of China to Taiwan across the strait), and the Cold War period that lasted from 1945 to 1989.[116] Upon its historization, Sung Wong Toi, according to Hon, is preserved in the form of a physical site in the natural environment as well as memories in texts[117]—I read this as an demonstration of "malleable materiality," where the manifold presence of Sung Wong Toi (as a thing to encounter and a place to visit) in different situated realities are intertwined with its various appearances in narratives;[118] yet, contrasting Hon's focus on the impact of human activities on the rock, I am more concerned with the agency of the rock particularly on the émigré-literati in Hong Kong in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. Whereas these literati and their intellectual activities are often considered to have played an important role in turning an originally unspectacular rock into a meaningful place as well as a cultural object that is filled with cultural and historical significances; in retrospect as well as from an alternate perspective, the rock in the physical environment and in texts has indeed stood as a long-time witness to the activities and the aesthetic pursuits of these literati. Sung Wong Toi's prominent presence in these literary works, which are regarded as some of the earliest proses and poems written in classical Chinese language that were published in Hong Kong, offers a plane to explore different relations and forces that connects the British authorities,

[116] Tze-ki Hon, "A Rock, A Text and A Tablet: Making the Song Emperor's Terrace a *Lieu de Mémoire*," in *Places of Memory in Modern China: History, Politics, and Identity*, ed. Marc Andre Matten (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 131-165, doi: 10.1163/9789004220966_006.
[117] Hon, 146.
[118] The concept of "malleable materiality" was discussed in Chapter 1, 27-28.

the migrants, the exiles, the Qing loyalists, the revolutionaries, the colonial subjects, among others, to the rock, and Hong Kong as a whole.

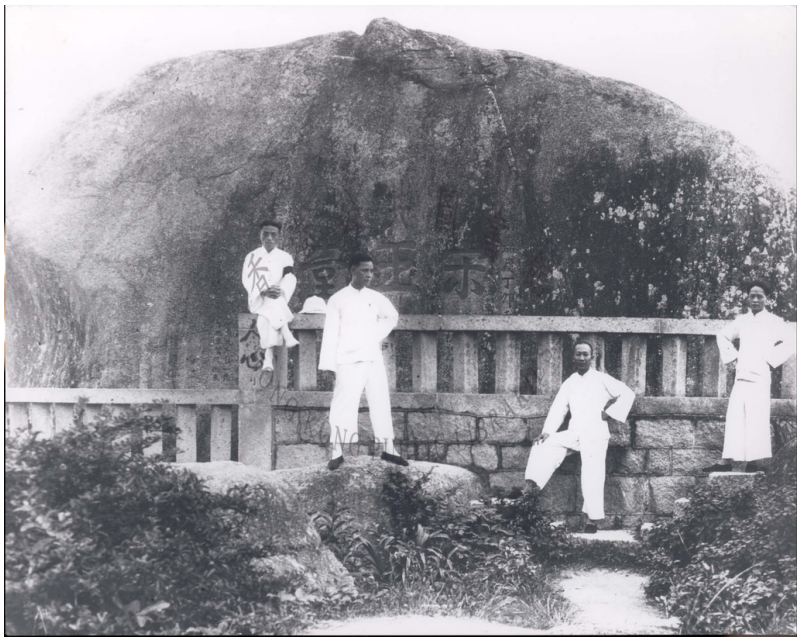

Fig 3.2 Sung Wong Toi and its visitors, ca. 1920s (source: Hong Kong Public Library)

In the late 18th century and the early 19th century, the popularity of Sung Wong Toi grew among the émigré-literati who had moved to the colony in order to escape the social and political turbulences in China. Sung Wong Toi was a site for these men of letters to hold leisure gatherings and intellectual activities to compose proses and poems, while inspiration was obtained from the rock.[119] One of these trips made to Sung Wong Toi was recorded in, if not reincarnated into, *Song tai qiu chang* 宋臺秋唱 (Autumn Singing at the Song Terrace), a collection of creative works compiled and published by Su Zedong 蘇澤東 (1858-1927) in Hong Kong in 1917. This special visit that took place in 1916 was initiated by Chen Batao 陳伯陶 (1854-1930), with the purpose to commemorate Zhao Qiuxiao 趙秋曉 (1245-1294), a poet who lived through the Song and Yuan dynasty and who was highly praised by Chen for his

[119] Chi-tak Chan 陳智德, *Di wen zhi* 地文誌:追憶香港地方與文學 [A Record of Place and Literature] (Taipei: Unitas Publishing, 2013), 28-30.

loyalty to the Song court.[120] In addition to this, the gathering, attended by more than ten literati including Su, the editor of the collection, and other contributors such as Lai Chi-hsi 賴際熙 (1856-1937), Zhang Xuehua 張學華 (1863-1951), and Wang Zhaoyong 汪兆鏞 (1861-1939), also aimed to show respect to all virtuous literati who had once pledged their loyalty to the Song court, despite the fall of the Song dynasty.[121]

The importance as well as the influence of Sung Wong Toi to these émigré-literati can be further illustrated by another collection *Song tai ji* 宋臺集 (Song Terrace Collection), which was compiled by Chen Buchi 陳步墀 (1870-1934) and published in the 1920s. With an eye to the titles of these works, not only that Sung Wong Toi is chanted, but actual visits to Sung Wong Toi are also documented, for instance, in Yang Qiguang's 楊其光 (1862-1925[122]) "Chun mun you Song Wang Tai" 春暮游宋王臺 (Visiting Sung Wong Toi during late spring), and Lai Chi-hsi's "Deng Song Wang Tai Zuo" 登宋王臺作 (Climbing Sung Wong Toi). These works—ranging from poems, proses, calligraphy, to paintings—can thereby be regarded as testimonies to both the trendy acts of visiting Sung Wong Toi, and the actual outcomes of these visits.[123] Moreover, the documentation of these visits and their resultant products in printed, circulable form reveal not only the importance of these visits to these émigré-literati who became attached to a local thing and place in the foreign land Hong Kong,

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[120] *Shu hai li zhu: Xianggang Zhong wen da xue tu shu guan zhen cang zhuan ji* 書海驪珠: 香港中文大學圖書館珍藏專輯 [From the treasure house: jewels from the library of the Chinese university of Hong Kong], ed. Wing-Man Chau 鄒穎文 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2014), xxxi.
Xianggang gu dian shi wen ji jing yan lu 香港古典詩文集經眼錄 [Bibliography of Hong Kong Chinese Literature], ed. Wing-Man Chau 鄒穎文 (Hong Kong: Chungwa Book, 2011), 13.

[121] Yu-lok Chiu 趙雨樂, "Gang Yue wenren de yaji yu jiaoyou" 港粵文人的雅集與交遊 [Literary Collection and Social Interation of Literati in Hong Kong and Guangdong], in *Wenhua Zhongguo de chonggou: jin xiandai Zhongguo zhishi fenzi de siwei yu huodong* 文化中國的重構—近現代中國知識分子的思維與活動 [Cultural China: The Intellectuals' Thought and Social Life in Modern and Contemporary Periods] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Educational Publishing Company, 2006), 154-176.

[122] According to *Jiulongcheng qu fengwuzhi* 九龍城區風物志 (Record of Places and Things in Kowloon City] (2005), Yang was born during the early years of the reign of Tongzi 同治 of the Qing Dynasty, which began from 1862; whereas in *Xiushi Louji* 繡詩樓集 (The Collection Works of Chen Buchi) compiled by Wong Kuan-lo in 2007, Yang's biographical information was traced to the specific years I quoted.

[123] Buchi Chen 陳步墀, "*Song tai ji"* 宋臺集 [Song Terrace Collection], in *Xiushi Louji* 繡詩樓集 [The Collection Works of Chen Buchi], ed. Kuan-lo Wong 黃坤堯 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, 2007), 171-206.

but also their desire to create substantial records of their own personal experiences and sentiments in connection to their past and present through Sung Wong Toi. Underlying these activities are also the quest of home and the question of identity: the situated present and the surrounding environment precisely urge, if not force, these newcomers to negotiate with the identities, values, knowledge, and political orientations they upheld.

By juxtaposing themselves with their Song counterparts, these émigré-literati came to grieve for their own selves—being dislocated from China to Hong Kong, they had also experienced the change of environment and the transition of power hierarchy; by the fall of the Qing dynasty, they were no longer subjects of the Qing imperial court, but, strictly speaking, colonial subjects ruled by the British government; as a nostalgic object to facilitate the mourning for the loss of home(land), Sung Wong Toi is therefore an interlocutor of different time-spaces, ranging from the situated present of the literati, the re-created pasts of their own, to the imagined pasts of their Song counterparts. Despite the phsyical presense of these literati in colonial Hong Kong, their attitude towards Hong Kong as a yet-to-define space is explcitly expressed in their works. Moreover, the potential mobility they enjoyed across the border also makes literary historians ask whether their works can be considered as a corpus under Hong Kong literature. What lies behind the source question concerning how "Hong Kong literature" is defined is indeed how "Hong Kong" is conceptualized. The answers to these questions reveal how the settlement of these literati in colonial Hong Kong is interpreted at different times. Much relevant to the discussion here, the connection between these émigré-literati and Hong Kong is indeed an epitome that reflects how a local relation, or a relation to the local, can or cannot be established according to different parameters.

"'Hong Kong' Literature" or not?
A Trace of Local Connection

The contested in-between-ness of these émigré-literati at instances of ambiguity finds echoes in the contemporary arguments concerning how "Hong Kong literature" is, and should be, defined. In dealing with the long withstanding controversy of what to include, or not to include, as "Hong Kong literature," the editorial committee of

Xianggang wenxue daxi 香港文學大系 (Compendium of Hong Kong Literature 1919-1949) series based their discussion on the following guideline:

> 1. "Hong Kong literature" should be differentiated from "literature that appeared in Hong Kong." For example, Ya Hsien's 痖弦 poetry collection *Kulinglin de yi ye* 苦苓林的一夜 (One night at *Kulinglin*) was published in Hong Kong, but shall not be considered as Hong Kong literature.
> 2. Writers who lived in Hong Kong for a certain period of time, and published their works in Hong Kong (via newspaper, journal, monograph, compilation etc.). Works by Lu Lun 呂倫 and Liu Huo-zi 劉火子 are the examples.
> 3. Writers who lived in Hong Kong for a certain period of time, and published their works overseas. For example, Xie Chenguang 謝晨光 published his works in Shanghai and other places.
> 4. Works that targeted readers in Hong Kong, and imposed impacts on the development of Hong Kong literature.[124] (my translation)

These discussion criteria not only pinpoint the circumstances under which a literary work is considered "Hong Kong literature," but also demonstrate how a work, or its writer, becomes connected to the concept of "Hong Kong" that constitutes "Hong Kong Literature." The final jurisdiction made by the editorial committee is, no doubt, bound to include some and exclude others. As a reference point amongst others, these choices reflect how different relations are established towards the local.

By comparing the different takes on defining Hong Kong literature, the unsaid embodiment of localness in Hong Kong literature can be given a new look. Contrasting *The Compendium of Hong Kong Literature* (2015), a different perspective

[124] Kwok-kau Chan 陳國球, General Introduction to *Xianggang wenxue daxi* 香港文學大系 1919-1949 [Compendium of Hong Kong Literature 1919-1949] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Commercial Press, 2016), 23.

is found in *Anthology of Hong Kong Literature 1948-1969* (1996) and its reprinted version *Anthology of New Hong Kong Literature 1950-1969* (2000), where the three editors William Tay, Wong Kai-chee, and Lo Wai-luen had decided to conceptualize "Hong Kong literature" according to the local subjectivity found in literary works. With this in mind, they mark 1949/1950 as the starting point of Hong Kong literature, by arguing for a local subjectivity that was produced by the southbound literati who moved to Hong Kong from China during the 1950s.[125] This argument is, however, revealed to be a paradox: With the recognition of a Hong Kong local subjectivity on the one hand, the three editors construct, perhaps unknowingly, a power hierarchy between Hong Kong literature and Chinese literature, by naming the latter as the "mother culture."[126] This approach is, moreover, challenged by Chan Kwok-kau, the chief editor of *The Compendium of Hong Kong Literature* series—in explicating the objectives in compiling the compendium, Chan indicates meticulously how the project differentiates itself from other existing compilations. For instance, Chan disagrees with the intentional omission of literary works that are written in classical Chinese language in *Anthology of Hong Kong Literature 1948-1969*; Chan also points out that renaming literature produced between 1950 and 1969 as "Hong Kong new literature" in the reprinted version of this anthology published in 2000 makes the approach no more objective and inclusive. In light of this, Chan contends that "newness" and "oldness" should be understood beyond literary form, language, and style, but the ways of thinking that the texts deliver.[127] This echoes to Ko Chia-cian's assertion of Sung Wong Toi in the collection *Song tai qiu chang* as a "landscape of commemoration" that breathes new air to classical Chinese poetry in the modern context of Hong Kong.[128] As a result, not only does the compendium decide to date

[125] Sin-piu Fan 樊善標, "Wenxue shi 'ruhe Xianggang' de shexiang─Zheng shusen, Huang jichi, Lu Weiluan Xianggang wenxue 'san ren tan' yu Chen Guoqiu '*Xianggang Wenxue daxi* zongxu'," 文學史「如何香港」的設想—鄭樹森、黃繼持、盧瑋鑾香港文學「三人談」 與陳國球〈香港文學大系總序〉[On Frameworks of Hong Kong Literary History: From William Tay, Wong Kai Chee and Lo Wai Luen's 'A Dialogue of Three Editors' to Chan Kwok Kou Leonard's Foreword of the *Compendium of Hong Kong Literature*], *Bulletin of Department of Chinese Literature, National Chengchi University* 政大中文學報 25 (September, 2016): 103-106.
[126] Ibid., 105.
[127] Chan, General Introduction to *Compendium of Hong Kong Literature 1919-1949*, 26.
[128] Chia-cian Ko 高嘉謙, *Yimin, Jiangjie yu Xian Dai Xing: Hanshi de Nanfang Lisan yu Shuqing 1895-1945* 遺民、疆界與現代性: 漢詩的南方離散與抒情 1895-1945 [Loyalists, Boundary, and Modernity: Southbound Diaspora and Lyricism of Classical-Style Chinese Poetry 1895-1945] (Taipei: Linking Books, 2016), 343-344.

back Hong Kong literature to the year 1919, but one entire volume is also dedicated to classical-styled writings that were produced in Hong Kong. As poems written by émigré-literati about Sung Wong Toi finally find their way to enter documentation under the name of "Hong Kong literature," a localized connection between the émigré-literati and Hong Kong that is facilitated by Sung Wong Toi is retrospectively established.

The scope opened up by *The Compendium of Hong Kong Literature* series thereby overturns the conventional understanding of "local" as a fixation of nativism; instead, "local" possesses elastic and flexible dimensions which are not bound by geographical parameters, but can be explored through cultural relations. The postmillennial reconnection of these literary works on Sung Wong Toi to Hong Kong literature engenders different ways of understanding Hong Kong's local. This remediated understanding of "local" and "Hong Kong" is supplemented by the insightful positioning of Hong Kong offered by the compendium: Hong Kong is understood as a literary and cultural space, while Hong Kong literature is the resultant products of this fluid, convivial space.[129] Going beyond the focus on literature, this concise yet pluralistic understanding of Hong Kong enables us to explore a translocal dimension of "local" that transcends geographical, political, and cultural boundaries at different moments. To complicate this, the translocal dimension is, nevertheless, a postmillennial remediation when the relation between the émigré-literati and Hong Kong is looked at in retrospect. This thereby raises a further question on whether "local" is conceived and perceived or not at the moment these texts were produced and consumed in the early 20th century.

To probe into this, the multiple presence of Sung Wong Toi shall be taken into consideration. With their devoted attachment to Sung Wong Toi, the self-subjectivization of the émigré-literati in colonial Hong Kong not only involves the agencies of things, places, and bodies, but also reveals a constellation that connects their situatedness to Sung Wong Toi against the socio-political context of the early 20th century, which is apparently different from the one constructed in *The Compendium* in postmillennial Hong Kong. Despite their internal differences, these constellations disclose the countless tangible and intangible presence of Sung Wong

[129] Chan, General Introduction to *Compendium of Hong Kong Literature 1919-1949,* 30.

Toi in different time-spaces: in addition to its physical rock-form in the situated reality occupied by the literati, Sung Wong Toi takes up different textual reappearances in their creative works; when considering other time-space, the appearance of Sung Wong Toi is then amplified accordingly; upon circulation, these representations mediate and are mediated by one another to generate different interpretations and other representations.

With respect to the manifold appearances of Sung Wong Toi, the agency of Sung Wong Toi indeed facilitates and is facilitated by various intersubjective, interobjective, and intertextual relations that are realized on the phenomenological level as well as the textual level. This rhizomatic network of relations that I will lay out in the following can tell us whether localized relations were once established in the early 20th century.

A Rhizomatic Network of Intersubjectivity, Interobjectivity, and Intertextuality

Interobjectivity is a notion developed by Bruno Latour as a supplement to intersubjectivity. By introducing interobjectivity, Latour aims to show how social structure is comprised of humans and nonhumans. With an eye to this, the relations of the two should be studied in social theories.[130] By probing into Sung Wong Toi (as a rock and a locale), the émigré-literati who were attracted to it, and the historical figures and events that are invoked in the representation of Sung Wong Toi, this particular constellation can precisely unfold the intersubjective, interobjective, and intertextual relations at work that constitutes a rhizomatic network as a whole.

To start with intersubjectivity, the emotional response provoked by Sung Wong Toi is dually personal and collective. One exemplar is the common act of weeping that is shared almost as an generic element in literary works collected in *Song tai qiu chang* and *Song tai ji*. In the poem that inaugurates *Song tai ji,* Chen Buchi uses the images of tears and white hair to solicit his grievance during his visit to Sung

[130] In a simple yet well-explained example, Latour delineates how human behaviour in everyday life (a regular scenario in the post office) is facilitated and affected by the presence of objects (the counter in the post office).
Bruno Latour, "On Interobjectivity," 238.

Wong Toi;[131] in the same collection, Zheng Debing 張德炳[132] in "Song Tai Huan Gu" 宋臺懷古 (Paying Homage to the Song Terrace) speaks of shedding tears upon remembering the (lost) territory before the terrace;[133] likewise, Wu Daojung 吳道鎔 (1852-1936) in "Song Wang Tai" 宋王臺 (Song Emperor's Terrace) describes the overflowing of tears by mourning Sung Wong Toi. [134] When the sentiments evoked by the rock among these émigré-literati are characterized by the recurrent theme of lamentation, these literary works *per se* can also be read as lamentation in its manifested form. By refusing to position these repetitive acts of mourning and weeping as something homogeneous and monotonous, I propose, instead, to map out an intersubjective network that is shared not only by these contemporaneous literati (on the horizontal axis), but also across the generations (on the vertical axis). Appeared in both Lai Chi-hsi's and Wang Zhaoyong's works, the term "yi dai bei" 異代悲, literally meaning cross-generational melancholy, portrays eloquently how the literati's reactions to Sung Wong Toi resonate the experiences of the past generations;[135] moreover, the term captures precisely the transmission and the translation of affects through generations and across different temporalities. In this regard, an intersubjective relation is established by the propagation of shared experiences and sentiments that traverse across time and through space. The

[131] The original line: 白頭吟罷淚縱橫。
The Collection Works of Chen Buchi, 173.
[132] The biographical details including the dates of birth and death of Zheng Debing is not known. A photo of Zheng standing in front of Sung Wong Toi with Chen Buchi and two other literati, dated in 1916, was inserted in *The Collection Works of Chen Buchi.*
Ibid., 61.
[133] The original line is: 回溯香垓涕淚多。
Ibid., 187.
[134] The original line is: 憑弔荒臺淚漫傾。
Daojung Wu 吳道鎔, "Song Wang Tai" 宋王臺 [Song Emperor's Terrace], in *Jiulongcheng qu fengwuzhi* 九龍城區風物志 [Record of Places and Things in Kowloon City], ed. Kar-Kin Chou 周家建, Kam-Wing Fung 馮錦榮, Tin-Keung Ko 高添強, Yun-Wo Lau 劉潤和 (Hong Kong: Kowloon City District Council, 2005), 59.
http://www.districtcouncils.gov.hk/kc/sc_chi/links/files/KCD_Heritage_Txt.pdf.
Record of Places and Things in Kowloon City, 59.
[135] Chi-hsi Lai 賴際熙, "Deng Song Wang Tai Zuo" 登宋王臺作 [Climbing Sung Wong Toi], in *The Collection Works of Chen Buchi,* 184;
Zhaoyong Wang 汪兆鏞, "Renxu liyue Su Xuanlou shuti Song Tai tu wong san shou (xuan yi)" 壬戌六月蘇選樓屬題宋臺圖詠三首〔選一〕[The 6th Month of the Year Renxue, 3 Chants about Song Terrance Paintings proposed by Su Xuanlou/Su Zedong (no. 1)], in *Record of Places and Things in Kowloon City*, 60.

connection to 'local' even when it appears is, nonetheless, transient and ephemeral.

With Sung Wong Toi as a rock and a place that facilitates the projection of different cultural and historical imagination, the operation of this intersubjectivity involves not only a spatialization of time, but also an interobjective dimension. The connection to local is, therefore, a demonstration of the translocal, where different "locals" are disseminated across different time-spaces by means of the respective intersubjective and interobjective relations at work. In this regard, Lai Chi-hsi's poem "Deng Song Wang Tai Zuo" 登宋王臺作 (Climbing Sung Wong Toi) provides an eloquent example to illustrate this. Consider a highly reflexive line that ends the poem,

> I am Xie Gaoyu weeping on the Western Terrace, but
> only to compose poems.[136] (my translation)

The unexpected appearance of "Xie Gaoyu," and the "Western Terrace" is the first clue to this switch of subjectivity and objectivity. Xie Gaoyu 謝皋羽 (1249-1295) is a literate who lived through the late Song dynasty and the early Yuan dynasty after witnessing the fall of the Song dynasty—having witnessed the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Lai thereby finds a linkage to enter Xie's life, such that the positions of the speaker "I" and Xie become interchangeable.[137] Likewise, a connection is formed between Sung Wong Toi and the Western Terrace—both as a terrace for Xie and Lai to visit in the physical world, and as a thing as well as a place that had stood witness to the passing of time and events. The transference of experience and sentiment between Xie and Lai is thereby facilitated by the presence of the terraces, despite the different temporalities they pertain.

At this point, the intersubjectivity and the interobjectivity discussed fold in another set of intertextual relation. "Deng Xi Tai tongku ji" 登西台慟哭記 (Weeping on the Western Terrace) is actually the title of a personal record written by Xie.[138] In this essay, Xie records his visits to three terraces over a period of nine years, namely

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[136] The original line is: 我亦當年謝皋羽，西臺慟哭只編詩。
Lai, "Deng Song Wang Tai Zuo" 登宋王臺作 [Climbing Sung Wong Toi], in *The Collection Works of Chen Buchi,* 184.

[137] The exact time of creation of the poem is not known; however, according to the biographical details of Lai, he moved to Hong Kong only after the 1911 Revolution. In other words, it is quite certain that his encounter with Sung Wong Toi took place after the imperial Qing court was overthrown.

[138] Gaoyu Xie 謝皋羽, "Deng Xi Tai Tong Ku Ji" 登西台慟哭記 [Weeping on the Western Terrace], Chinese Text Project, accessed July 21, 2016, http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=867698.

"Kusu Tai" 姑蘇台 (Kusu Terrace), "Yuewang Tai" 越王台 (Terrace of King Yue), and "Xi Tai" 西台 (Western Terrace) which is also called *Yan Ziling Tai* 嚴子陵台 (Terrace of Yan Ziling), a place Xie had previously visited with his father as a young child.[139] By recontextualizing Xie's use of "Tai" 台 (terrace) in his poem (where Lai's "tai" means Sung Wang Toi), Lai reinvents a spatial relation that connects the four terraces, also as four historical sites, together. As emotions are engendered accordingly across these terraces in the worlds of texts, the worlds of the poets, and the worlds of the readers, Sung Wang Toi provides a passageway not only for Lai to enter the world of Xie and the world envisioned by Xie in his writing, but also for readers to access Lai's world, and Xie's worlds through Lai's poem as a medium. Meanwhile, how personal and interpersonal experiences and sentiments are expressed in Xie's work and are subsequently transferred to Lai's work, and vice versa, not only reveals the agency of Sung Wong Toi and other terraces; but also their interobjective, intersubjective, and intertextual connections to each other.

Last but not least, not only things and places, but also bodies are involved in translating meanings and sentiments on multiple levels. In an explicit manner, Lai refers himself to the Song loyalist Xie Gaoyu. Under further scrutiny, Xie in his work also makes references to other historical figures such as Tang politician Yan Gaoqing 顏杲卿 (692-759) and general Zhang Xun 張巡 (709-757), both well known for their loyalty to the Tang imperial court. While Xie's work was composed under the authoritarian control and the stringent censorship of the Yuan court, the intertextual references enable multiple layers of connotation to be encoded and hopefully to be decoded upon reception: Xie's admiration to the two Tang loyalists leads the readers ultimately to encounter Wen Tianxiang 文天祥 (1236-1283), a Song loyalist whom Xie had followed during the Song resistance against the Mongolian army. With reference to works created by Wen and his biographical details, the purposeful appearance of Yan Gaoqing provides the first clue: Wen had also mentioned Yan Gaoqing in his poem "Zheng Qi Ge" 正氣歌 (Song of Righteousness), where Wen

[139] Ruming Ding 丁如明, "Xie Gaoyu: Deng Xitai Tongku Ji" 謝皋羽: 登西台慟哭記 [Xie Gaoyu: Weeping on the Western Terrace], in *Guwen guanzhi yizhu* 古文觀止譯注 [An Annoted Anthology of Classical Prose], eds. Wu Chucai 吳楚材, and Wu Diaohou 吳調侯 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshi 上海古籍出版社, 2007), 415-416.

sampled righteous deeds that he admired over the course of Chinese history when he was being held hostage by the Mongolian army. The Terrace of King Yue as title of a poem composed by Wen offers the second clue. In addition to this, the appearance of two other historical figures Goujian and Fuchai in Xie's work can also be read as a symbol of rival and adversary: Kusu Terrace was built during the reign of King Fuchai of Wu in the late Spring and Autumn Period, while Terrace of King Yue was built by King Goujian of Yue after defeating Fuchai—the connotation to social and political turbulences precisely correlates to what Xie experienced upon the fall of the Song dynasty, and what Lai did in a few centuries after. Whether they are mentioned explicitly or implicitly in Lai's, Xie's, and Wen's works, historical figures (Yan Gaoqing, Zhang Xun, Wen Tianxiang, Xie Gaoyu), the writers of these texts (Wen, Xie, and Lai), and the readers who take up various roles as the mediator, the interpreter and the co-creator of these texts and others become interconnected. Travelling between Lai and Xie, Xie and Wen, Wen and Yan, and among others, intertextual reference, and intersubjective, as well as interobjective relations are indeed vital for unspeakable sentiments to be solicited and for multiple identities to be performed.

Ranging from Goujian and Fuchai at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period, Tang loyalists at the fall of Tang Dynasty, Wen and Xie upon the collapse of the Song court, to what Lai and his compatriots experienced from the crumbling of the Qing dynasty, all these interwoven temporalities and spatialities give rise to heterogeneous spaces, which are complicated by the amalgamation of different subjectivities and objectivities. While each strand of historical and cultural imagination—facilitated by different terraces, historical sites, and bodies—constellates a world of their own, the fluid transference of sentiments and the circulation of meanings transgress the geographical and temporal boundaries of these different worlds. Albeit these changing configurations, Sung Wong Toi should not be forgotten as a localized mediator that emits agency and gears the formation of different subjectivities and identities (e.g. loyalists, remnants etc.) during the rock's encounter with Lai in his situated reality.

With an eye to the intertextual, interobjective, and intersubjective relations hitherto exposed, to determine whether an attachment to a local thing and place is an expression of localness or not is indeed, in itself, an interpretation that, in return,

conceives the local. In other words, how localness is played out or not is always subject to how certain relations in this rhizomatic network cross paths with one another, or not. In the case of Sung Wong Toi, its connection to 'Hong Kong' is not explicitly expressed in the literary works produced by these émigré-literati; whereas a different picture is revealed not by the cultural force but a political one, which can be, to a certain extent, backdated as a preliminary staging of Hong Kong localness.

Preliminary Staging of Hong Kong localness?

Contrasting to the typical approach of colonialist narratives in rendering Hong Kong into a "barren rock" with no precolonial historical and cultural significance, Sung Wong Toi is among the first sites to be recognized through legislative means with historical values in Hong Kong under British colonialism. In 1898, Sung Wong Toi was introduced to the political realm by Ho Kai 何啟 (1859-1914) when Ho, a lawyer and a member of the Legislative Council, initiated a bill to have it preserved. With this in the background, Ho's argument can be retrospectively regarded as a preliminary staging of Hong Kong localness of his time.

On August 15, 1898, Ho delivered a speech in the Legislative Council addressing the need to balance urban development with heritage preservation, and this point was made 39 years after the Kowloon peninsula (where Sung Wong Toi is located) was ceded to Britain. To pave way for his main argument to arrive, Ho chose to approach the subject of Hong Kong as a whole, prior to Sung Wong Toi:

> ...the rapid growth of Hongkong itself, from the barren rock of 50 years ago to a most thickly populated place—more thickly populated per square mile, I should say, than any other city in the world...[140]

How Hong Kong is positioned in Ho's speech is intriguing and, to a certain degree, oxymoronic: On the one hand, Ho aims to preserve Sung Wong Toi, a rock that signifies the precolonial history of Hong Kong; on the other hand, the imagery of Hong Kong as a "barren rock" asserts its presence, and can certainly be traced back to

[140] *Hong Kong Hansard*, August 15, 1898, 49, accessed 10 October 2016, http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/hkgro/view/h1898/3289.pdf.

Lord Palmerston's discontent with British acquisition of Hong Kong, which implies the precolonial insignificance of Hong Kong from a colonizer's point of view. To this end, Ho's comment concerning the growth of Hong Kong under British administration aligns very much to the colonial discourse, where colonization and the spread of imperialism are, for instance, legitimized through civilizing missions such as the development and the modernization of a "barren rock" to a meaningful place. A similar attitude can be traced in Geoffrey Robley Sayer's historical work on Hong Kong published in 1937 where the history of Hong Kong from 1862 to 1941 was framed by "birth, adolescence and coming of age." It is somehow of no surprise when explicitly indicating his disinterest in "the story of the island before the occupation," Sayer argues that

> it is sufficient to be able to point out that when this island passed into English hands it was a barren and sparsely inhabited spot and had been so far a century and more.[141]

Similar to Sayer, Ho Kai in his argument perceives and conceives the dawn of modernity through a coming-of-age narrative of Hong Kong that glorifies growth (from "the barren rock" to "a most thickly populated place"). As it is delineated in Chapter 1, the story of progress and success is not only found in colonialist narratives, but also ironically in anti-colonialist narratives based on a China-centered Marxist ideology. Adopted in both perspectives is the liberal modernist framework in reading, if not glossing over, the development of Hong Kong.[142] Under scrutiny, Ho's argument and his positioning of Hong Kong in his speech are precisely caught at a crossroads where various ideologies, however contrary, are entangled. Nonetheless, Ho—unlike Sayer—attempts in latter parts of his speech to steer away from the colonizer's perspective that annihilates the precolonial history of Hong Kong entirely; nor does he turn to China, in order to achieve this goal. Instead, Ho argues for the importance of the local component of Hong Kong, and Sung Wong Toi is precisely one such example:

> I wish to preserve for the colony of Hong Kong a

[141] Geoffrey Robley Sayer, *Hong Kong 1841-1862: Birth, Adolescence and Coming of Age* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press: 1980), 5.
[142] Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 2.

> monument of some antiquity. There stands on this spot a large stone with an inscription upon it close upon 600 or over 600 years old. Everywhere in this colony we meet with new objects—inventions of modern civilization—but in this one spot we can gaze upon a monument of over 600 years old.[143]

Ho's argument is intriguing, since it deviates from the conventional colonial discourse in flattening the voice of the local and the perks of the local landscape; meanwhile, Ho's perception towards Sung Wong Toi does not comply with the approach of other admirers of the rock (i.e. the émigré-literati) that situates Sung Wong Toi under the historical imagination of imperial China.

It is therefore noteworthy that Ho's perspective entails various discourses and ideologies, where many of them are superficially incompatible, if not inherently contradictory, with one another. Simply considering the notion of modernity, its master narrative by convention is built on the notion of linear progress and the strong belief in science, technology, and rationality; heavily influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, modernity entails primarily an anthropocentric worldview where humans, human subjectivities, and relations are treated as subjects. Ho, for instance, refers to "inventions of modern civilization" as "new objects." To this extent, Ho's application of the modern might as well reflect human intervention in historicizing a rock and monumentalizing a place, where historical and cultural connotations are imposed by humans, like Ho and his contemporaries. This thereby reminds one of the internal contradiction of the modernist mind-set, which has been repeatedly slammed by Bruno Latour. According to Latour, the modernist inconsistent treatment of the nonhuman is, in simple terms, demonstrated in the priority given to objective facts and data on the one side, and the distrust to objects as something irrelevant, irrational, and insignificant on the other.[144] Nonetheless, by acknowledging the radiation of historical and cultural significances from Sung Wong Toi which exists as a rock in the natural landscape, Ho indeed attributes agency to Sung Wong Toi as a "stone" and a "spot" where can be differentiated from other "new objects." In this regard, Ho actually

[143] Ibid., 50.
[144] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

rekindles the connection between human, thing, and place that Latour ceaselessly calls for.

Although it is almost impossible to judge by this case alone whether Ho's particular way of reasoning is a deliberate act or not, Law Wing-sang's reading of Ho offers an extra dimension to the entanglement exposed in the above: Ho, to Law, is a representative figure of the "collaborative-colonial intelligentsia" whose double identity is embedded in the double roles he played as a Hong Kong-based Chinese elite who was regarded as a leader in the Chinese community, and simultaneously as a highly involved British Chinese subject who assisted the colonial government in building up and consolidating its power in Hong Kong.[145] Furthermore, Ho's speech in arguing for the preservation of Sung Wong Toi corresponds to Law's detailed analysis of Ho whose advantageous in-between-ness is demonstrated in his keen connection to the colonial power and his other leg in the Chinese community. Despite the fact that Ho's biographical accounts often emphasized much on his "Chineseness" (for instance, Ho as a "Chinese" leader of the "Chinese community" in colonial Hong Kong), Ho never situates Sung Wong Toi in connection with Chinese traditionalism, which is readily made available by the conscious activities of the émigré-literati around the rock, and is strategically encouraged by the British authorities in colonial Hong Kong.[146] On the contrary, Ho chooses to position the rock in a solely independent context of its own that is circumscribed by Hong Kong alone geographically and politically. This highly intriguing conceptualization and perception of Sung Wong Toi that is exposed in Ho's speech thereby showcases a very preliminary, largely unconscious staging of Hong Kong localness that precedes any prevailing subjectivity that can be found in Ho Kai's era.

As Mirana M. Szeto names Queen's Pier as a "living subaltern heritage," Sung Wong Toi can as well be understood as such. In her essay "Intra-local and Inter-local Sinophone," Szeto contends that post-1997 sentiments in the city such as the public awareness of heritage preservation and the strong urge to democratize city planning are rooted in the cultural and affective affinities disseminated before 1997. In this

[145] Wing-sang Law, "Double Identity of Colonial Intelligentsia: Ho Kai," in *Collaborative Colonial Power,* 79-102.
[146] The promotion and the practice of Chinese traditionalism will later on be discussed in details in this chapter.

regard, Queen's Pier, albeit its functional and symbolic position as a locale for royal ceremony to take place during the colonial era of Hong Kong, is understood by Szeto as:

> a favourite grassroots public space, a sanctuary for Filipino migrant workers, a place of importance to silenced subaltern histories of local social movements which gave birth to struggles for democracy, cultural rights, workers' rights and anticolonial movements.[147]

In other words, this suggests the mingling of a postcolonial subjectivity, however latent or subtle, amidst colonial experience. In the case of Sung Wong Toi, the brief expression of Hong Kong localness, despite that it is not built on any stable, not to say visible, ground, corresponds to this subaltern nature embodied in a local heritage. On the one hand, for a rock and a place to be considered as a subaltern offers a link between Spivak's famous interrogation and criticism of the subaltern in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and the postcolonial openness she calls for in "Imperatives to Re-imagine the Planet" that was consulted in the introductory chapter. This, moreover, explains the endeavour it costs in this chapter to have this subaltern excavated. On the other hand, the threefold relations (intertextual, intersubjective and interobjective) revealed earlier and the example of Ho correlate to the rhizomatic "intertextual" connections and the "critical constellation of the past and the present" that Szeto follows in examining the works of Sai Sai and Wong Bik-wan, which is her response to Shih Shu-mei's call concerning the study of Sinophone articulations.[148]

In a nutshell, Ho's constellation of Hong Kong, as it is revealed in his positioning of Sung Wong Toi, involves manifold loci and entangled relations, thus making it impossible to designate a consistent standpoint, or extract a single theoretical framework from his argument. Under the presence of a liberal modernist logic, the absence of nations, and the deviation from a colonizer's and a China-centred perspective, it is the loophole in Ho's ideological 'inconsistence' and political 'inadequacy' that allows something local, along with thing ("stone") and place ("spot") as a manifestation of this localness, to be preliminarily revealed and perhaps

[147] Mirana M. Szeto, "Intra-local and Inter-local Sinophone," in *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader*, ed. Shih Shu-mei et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 194.
[148] Ibid., 193.

unconsciously acknowledged. Largely diffused on different levels of consciousness, Ho Kai's example allows us to take a glimpse at a probationary incubation of a localness which had never been formally admitted before and even during his time. It is noteworthy to see how the attention to something local, however primitive, comes to take form momentarily between the edges of normative orders and beyond the master narrative that prevails in the society.

The Worlds of
Sung Wong Toi, Colonial Hong Kong, and its Dwellers

As an outcome of Ho Kai's effort, Sung Wong Toi was enlisted in 1898 as a site "of antiquarian interest" protected under the "Sung Wong Toi Reservation Ordinance."[149] By the 1930s, Sung Wong Toi enters representation in the colonial discourse as a "story of the island before the occupation" under the pen of Sayer:

> On the mainland—I refer to that part which now forms part of the Colony—there are two historical monuments, and two only ... Sung Wong T'oi, 'platform of the Sung Emperor', near Kowloon City [...], consisting of a conspicuous granite boulder incised with Chinese characters (Sung Wong Toi), is well known, and has been preserved for some thirty years as an ancient monument by the Government of Hong Kong, It is recorded in the standard Chinese histories that the fleet of the last emperor of the Sung Dynasty was wrecked off Ngai Mun, which is identified with Wang Mun across the Canton river estuary. And the incised rock is traditionally said to mark the temporary lodging-place of the emperor before he embarked to meet his fate.[150]

Sayer's treatment of the site is, no doubt, descriptive and informative, and this marks its difference from Ho Kai's perspective aforementioned, not to mention the émigré-

[149] "Government Notification No. 366," in *The Hongkong Government Gazette*, August 20, 1898, 828. http://sunzi.lib.hku.hk/hkgro/view/g1898/633607.pdf.
[150] Sayer, 5-6.

literati's enthusiasm in visiting and chanting the rock. As the significance of Sung Wong Toi as a rock as well as a place resting in the natural landscape is recognized and conceived through the means of legislation and policy-making procedures, the colonizer's worldview, nonetheless, persists where a whole different world lived up by the émigré-literati is left unseen from a distance in Sayer's account of Hong Kong's history.

Fig. 3.3 Sung Wong Toi and its surroundings, ca. 1920 (source: Hong Kong Public Library)

After the preservation plan had been in effect for a decade and more, Lai Chi-hsi, one key member of this émigré-literati's community, lobbied to the colonial government in 1915, with a request to turn Sung Wong Toi and Sacred Hill into a park. With the financial aid of a local philanthropist Li Sui-kam 李瑞琴 (1870-?), a balustrade was built to protect the rock, thus making it a real terrace as well as a highly 'valued' site for visit. Furthermore, monumental gate, pavilions, and walking paths were consecutively installed to facilitate leisure activities to be carried out inside the park.[151] The re-engineering of the physical environment surrounding the rock further facilitates the activities of these literati that encompass the aesthetic textualization of Sung Wong Toi. Meanwhile, the social behaviours of this group are reciprocally shaped by the cultural and historical imagination they collectively share towards Sung Wong Toi. Through the intertextual, intersubjective and interobjective relations they explored in the rock and in their creative works, these émigré-literati found ways to be connected to ancient Chinese history and culture in colonial Hong Kong.

While this perspectival framing of Sung Wong Toi is apparently different from what is laid down in the colonial discourse, this does not automatically put these

[151] See the epigraph erected in the Sung Wong Toi Garden.

literati on the same line with Ho Kai. This shows that varying connotation and perception of Sung Wong Toi constantly mediate and are mediated by the manifold appearances of the rock in the physical environment and in texts; and this can be further complicated by the different worldviews pertained by different perceivers: To Ho Kai, Sung Wong Toi is a representation of the unsaid Hong Kong localness, as it stands witness to the history and the development of the city; to the émigré-literati fleeing to Hong Kong from China, Sung Wong Toi remains as a site for nostalgia as well as a nostalgic object that facilitates their cultural and historical imagination of ancient China and solicits their sentiments towards the loss of a home; to the colonizer, Sung Wong Toi, as Sayer suggests, is still probably not too convinced with the significance of a rock lying on the "barren rock," or "barren island," itself. All these can thereby be regarded as the contrasting cultural and political landscapes which circumscribe and are simultaneously circumscribed by different configurations of cultural identity, affects, experience, among others, in connection to Sung Wong Toi and Hong Kong at large in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. With an eye to these perspectival differences, I seek to put the émigré-literati who are often understood as a collective under scrutiny, with a view to infuse plurality to the local landscape where varying positionings of remnant, loyalist, adherent, among others, are interwoven with one another.

Albeit the almost inevitable diversity of social background and political orientation, the term "émigré-literati" generally refer to those who fled to Hong Kong due to the political upheavals in China in the late 19th century and the early 20th century and sought to produce creative works upon settling in Hong Kong. This chapter insofar takes up the use of this composite term, based on its descriptive nature, its relevance in connection to the time-space involved in the discussion, and the recognition of the term that is asserted by this group in their self-representations. In the original Chinese-language context, these literati, having been displaced from their homes, often identified themselves as *Qing yimin* 清遺民.[152] Literally meaning the surviving civilian(s) upon the change of a political regime (in this case, the fall of the

[152] Chung-shan Ching 程中山, Introduction to *Xianggang wenxue daxi* 1919-1949: *jiuti wenxue juan* 香港文學大系 1919-1949: 舊體文學卷 [The Compendium of Hong Kong Literature: Classical-Styled Literature 1919-1949], ed. Chung-shan Ching 程中山 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Commercial Press, 2016), 59-61.

Qing dynasty), the term is often translated into English as "Qing loyalist," and sometimes as "Qing adherent" in academic works.[153] Whereas a sense of abandonment ("yi") is inscribed in the original context, the translations suggest that the person is psychologically bound to remain loyal and adhered to the Qing dynasty. While the original term does not contain any clear indication of the active repudiator (who abandons) and the passive recipient (who is being abandoned) in this procedure of exile, the affective embodiment of allegiance in the two translations, however, conveys a person's unwillingness to be identified with the new political regime in power, and hence implies the person as the one who is abandoned by an bygone era. By raising questions on the legitimacy in striking a direct equation between *yimin*, loyalist and adherent, this enables us to examine how ethnicity, race, and nation-state interplay with identity politics among the émigré-literati who posited their presence as the *yimin* of imperial China in colonial Hong Kong but yet became affectively engaged with Sung Wong Toi as a local thing and place in a territory they might call 'home.'

To start with, *yimin* is not just a social phenomenon in connection to political change, but is also a self-asserted identity that guides a certain way of seeing and reading—and this is reciprocally reflected in cultural formations, social behaviours and political orientations, ranging from an individual's perspective to a collective basis.[154] In ancient China, the growth of *yimin* in the population usually takes place upon dynastic transition, where the acquisition of this shared identity can be spotted in literary works that build on related subject matters such as exiles, the loss of homeland, and nostalgia for the past, and where emotional responses such as grievance, reminiscence, and frustration are solicited. With Sung Wong Toi as a common object to chant, the poems discussed earlier are exemplars of this *yimin* complex where the psyche of these Qing *yimin* is shown externalized to the environment they are exposed to, and complicated by the socio-political reality they confront, and the experiences accumulated as a result of their relocation. In exploring

[153] This is, for instance, the case in the translation of Ko Chia-cian's work.
Chia-cian Ko, "Song History in Kowloon and Loyalist Classical Poetry: Chen Botao, Sung Wong Toi, and *Autumn Chants on the Terrace of the Song Emperors*," trans. Andy Rodekohr, *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 3, Issue 2 (November 2016): 448-470.
[154] Chih-hung Lin 林志宏, *Minguo nai diguo ye: Zhengzhi wenhua zhuanxing xia de Qing yimin* 民國乃敵國也: 政治文化轉型下的清遺民 [The Republic of China is the Enemy: The Qing Loyalists and the Changes in Chinese Political Culture] (Taipei: Linking Books, 2009).

the rhizomatic network of the threefold intertextual, interobjective and intersubjective connections, "intergenerational melancholy" was proven to be a key that allows different temporalities, spatialities, and subjectivities to travel, and different degrees of connectivity to engender. The desire to connect to other times, spaces, and generations that share a similar plight can be observed beyond aesthetic creation: Quite a number of these Qing *yimin* like Chen Batao and Wang Zhaoyong devoted themselves in the historical investigation of other *yimin* groups. Chen's *Song Dongguan yimin lu* 宋東莞遺民錄 (Records of Song *Yimin* in Dongguan) (1919) and *Shengchao Yuedong yimin lu* 勝朝粵東遺民錄 (Records of Song *Yimin* in East Canton) (1929) offer an historical overview of the livelihood of the Song descendants during the Yuan dynasty in southern China. The two books not only distribute historical significance to the emergence and the activities of *yimin*, but also constitute some of the earliest historical records of Sung Wong Toi in Hong Kong. To this end, Sung Wong Toi finds another way (in this case, historical writings) to enter representation. Based on different degrees of connectivity, and depending on the connection established, the *yimin* complex can be distinguished as different worldviews that are forced out upon political transition, where pre-existing values, identities, mentalities, political stances, and social behaviours, among others, came into contact and conflict with one another, and critical decisions have to be made so as to decide what to keep and what to discard, upon the inevitable arrival of the new. The decisions made by different individuals subsequently presume a way of dealing with the new socio-political landscape and the assertion of one's position and identity upon the dawn of a new era. With an eye to Chen Batao's scholarly interest on the Song *yimin* and the empathy he projected as a *yimin* himself, one can again hear the echoes of the "intergenerational melancholy" that concerns Chen's personal experience and his own situatedness.

In this regard, Chen Batao is a representative figure among the group of *yimin* who can be genuinely identified as Qing loyalists. He, for instance, pledged his loyalty to the Qing court by living in the Kowloon Walled City of the colony, a fortification which was left out in the convention signed between British and China in 1898 when the New Territories were put on a lease for ninety-nine years.[155] In other words, the

[155] Chau-hung Dung 董就雄, "Chen Botao zhongjie guan shixi" 陳伯陶忠節觀試析 [An Analysis of Chen Botao's Loyalism], *Journal of Chinese Literary Studies* 文學論衡 17 (December 2012): 13-34.

walled city remained a territory controlled by the Qing court until the fall of the empire in 1911. Chen's persisting loyalty and adherence to the imperial court are also revealed, when he refused to take up a position offered by the Republican government, whose establishment in 1911 had brought an end to the dynastical system and monarchy in China.[156] By asserting his identity as a *yimin*, Chen constellated his live world by the unquestionable, unshakable rule of the Qing court, and his worldview to the imperial system at large, which was based on the ideal model set up by the Song *yimin*. Also self-identified as a *yimin*, Wang Zhaoyong, on the contrary, had a different approach in positing himself in face of the political upheaval. As an editor and a contributor to *Yuan Guangdong Yimin Lu* 元廣東遺民錄 (Records of Yuan *Yimin* in Canton), Wang reiterated that the *yimin* mentality should not be reduced to just a wish to restore the Qing court in particular, or the imperial system at large; but the valorization of virtues such as justice and righteousness, and the dissemination of these values, should be emphasized instead. By refusing to fixate *yimin* in accordance with any political regime or any mono-ethnic nationalism, Wang called on Song *yimin*, Yuan *yimin,* and Ming *Yimin* in his different works to bring out the cultural and the philosophical components that constitute an alternate *yimin* worldview which transcends sovereign power and ethnic difference.[157] Albeit the common title they share as *yimin*, and the disparity between their respective *yimin* positionings, both Chen and Wang differ from the prevailing notion of ethnic nationalism in the Republican era: Chen and the group he represents expressed overtly their nostalgia for a bygone time-space that is tied to the imperial court, be it the Qing, or the Song. Their attachment to the Qing imperial court whose royalty follows a Manchurian lineage certainly upsets the prevailing Han-centric ideology where a 'proper' nation is, *de facto*, understood to be one that is governed by the Han. For Wang, his aim to compile a historical record of Yuan *yimin* was inspired by Chen and other *yimin* in history who had conducted similar works. Without siding with any ethnic groups, Wang's emphasis on traditional culture and values offers a vantage point where the course of Chinese history, amidst countless political and social turbulences, is reconnected with

[156] Yu-lok Chiu 趙雨樂, *Jindai nanlai wenren de Xianggang yinxiang yu guozu yishi* 近代南來文人的香港印象與國族意識 [Modern South-coming Intellectual's Impression of Hong Kong and Their Nationalist Awareness] (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Joint Publishing, 2017), 129.
[157] Ibid., 149-151.

a continuity which is ironically proposed by a *yimin* in times of the rupture of the political system. Unlike Chen, but still different from the advocators of ethnical nationalism, Wang's imagination of a cultural "China" through juxtaposing different generations of *yimin* problematizes the conventional conceptualization of a nation and a national identity, where boundaries and parameters are set up, implicitly and explicitly, on the levels of geography, ideology, ethnicity, among others.

With regard to the abovementioned examples, the term *yimin* should not be taken unquestionably as a sweeping collective, nor interpreted through the ambiguous roles played by the "loyalist" and the "adherent." Instead, the diversity and plurality embodied in *yimin* as a title as well as a notion should be rightfully acknowledged and taken into consideration. Likewise, it is also proven that the émigré-literati community in colonial Hong Kong, where Qing *yimin* found shelter in, is composed of diverse personae with different values, identities, and political orientations, among others. Having lived under the imperial rule of the Qing dynasty, *yimin* like Chen Batao and Wang Zhaoyong, when in Hong Kong, became the colonial subjects of the British Empire; however, different entangled forces from the British Empire, the Qing court, the Qing loyalists, the revolutionaries, the Chinese Republican government, and other foreign powers never ceased to cast effects on one another in colonial Hong Kong, where cross-border movement was never an issue. Things, places, and bodies that are situated in, and simultaneously constitute, the fluid, in-between space of Hong Kong are of course unavoidably subject to the influences of these forces, and altogether they are the agencies in constellating different landscapes on the cultural, social and political levels. For instance, Wang, like Chen, had declined a position offered to him by the Republican government in China, where recurrent events as such not only suggest trans-(geopolitical-)border contact, but also laterally imply the activities of different powers in luring for support, collaboration, and empowerment. Nevertheless, Lai Chi-hsi, a *yimin* who, like Chen, had pledged his loyalty to the Qing court, agreed to assist the British colonial authorities in establishing the Department of Chinese at the University of Hong Kong in 1927, with a goal to propagate Chinese traditional culture and knowledge in colonial Hong Kong. Although the insistence in the teaching of classical writing and traditional values poses a stark contrast to the revolutionary mind-set promoted in the literary and cultural movements that took place in mainland

China around the same time, it is not too much of a surprise for Lai—a literati who acquired his educational upbringing from the Chinese imperial examination system—to take part in this collaborative project, when compared to the colonizer who was shown to have little interest in the local history of the territory before. Under scrutiny, the cultivation of Chinese traditionalism in colonial Hong Kong is believed to be a strategy partaken by the colonial authorities, such that the growth of nationalism and communism could be suppressed by the promotion of hierarchy, loyalty and subservience in the territory.[158] On this level, the influences of the British colonizer and the Chinese intelligentsia in the colony are reinforced by one another. As a whole, all these intertwining forces, together with the rhizomatic network of relations, make the experiences of living in colonial Hong Kong during this period of time distinctive and atypical from the landscapes across different land and sea borders. The affinity shared among the émigré-literati with Sung Wong Toi, in spite of the internal differences of the group, is not only revealed in the cultural representations of the rock produced against this particular socio-political context in Hong Kong; but by recognizing the agency of the rock in shaping the physical behaviour of this group, and imposing different emotional impacts to its members, perspectives, sentiments, and experiences that are specific to the time-space of Hong Kong, these undertakings also mediate and are mediated by how the rock, Hong Kong, and different people like the literati, the *yimin*, the colonizer, Ho Kai, and others, are varyingly constellated. Under these circumstances, constellations as such can be regarded as an expression of local, where "local" in this context refers not exactly to a manifesto-like assertion of a local subjectivity, but localized relations that deviate from some overarching forces (like nationalism and colonialism) that are conventionally understood as fixations. In this regard, Chen Batao, Wang Zhaoyong, and Lai Chi-hsi as representative *yimin* of the era actually showcase alternative ways of understanding nationalism and colonialism. For instance, they defy the Han-non-Han paradigm and Han-Chinese nationalism that are often treated as a general interpretation to cultural representations and historical writings produced upon dynastic transition, and particularly in their case, the abolishment of monarchical power and imperial sovereignty at the turn of the

[158] Jung-fang Tsai, *Hong Kong in Chinese History*, 255-256, 296.
Also see: Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 106-109.

20th Century.[159] Meanwhile, the colonizer's endorsement of their activities in Hong Kong echoes to Law's investigation of "collaborative colonial power," where the manifold operation of heterogeneous colonialities in this particular historical juncture is revealed.

Last but not least, among this group of émigré-literati who shared Sung Wong Toi as their common chanting object, revolutionaries such as Hu Hanmin 胡漢民 (1879-1936), Yu Youren 于右任 (1879-1964), and Chen Shuren 陳樹人 (1883-1948) were also present. Contrary to *yimin*, these supporters of the revolutionary movement had a goal to overturn the Qing dynasty and establish a new nation in form of a republic. Diverse political aspirations, identities, and ideologies upheld by different members of this group are thereby inscribed in different constellations of the rock, Hong Kong, and these people who, nonetheless, share their common affinity of being attracted and connected by Sung Wong Toi. The excavation of localized relations (as the ephemeral, preliminary expression of local) that are materialized by Sung Wong Toi echoes to the postcolonial lessons that tell us the need to understand nationalism and colonialism beyond an "either/or" structure.[160]

Reconfiguring "Hong Kong," "Chinese," and "Hong Kong Chinese"

In spite of their shared recognition of the meaningfulness of Sung Wong Toi, Ho Kai drew a clear line between the émigré-literati and himself who was "not a very great admirer of antiquity," even when he made efforts in a political institution like the Legislative Council, which was dominated by British authorities at that time, to have the rock and its inscription preserved.[161] To this end, the cultural and historical imagination projected by the literati as the keen 'admirers' of the rock and the preoccupation of the indisputable growth of the colony supported by Ho as a 'faithful' colonial subject operate as two parallel lines that do not cross path, but both yield to a consensus towards the value (now understood as agency) of the rock, and their urge to preserve Sung Wong Toi. In other words, the expression of different localized relations is, indeed, dependent on the respective connectivity at work between Sung

[159] Jing Tsu, *Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).
[160] Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 5.
[161] *Hong Kong Hansard*, August 15, 1898, 50.

Wong Toi and its perceivers. These relations that are inscribed in how Sung Wong Toi is represented, interpreted, and circulated, are shown to constitute different constellations of the local, the translocal, and the national in the previous session of the discussion. To take a step further in the concluding remarks of this chapter, I seek to problematize the perception and the conceptualization of "Hong Kong," "Chinese," or "Hong Kong Chinese" by the intrusion of the (nonhuman) local. If antiquity like Sung Wong Toi, according to Ho Kai, is a source of "local matters," "local" is indeed understood to be something that is attached to geological formation (Sung Wong Toi as a rock that exists for long before the arrival of any human inhabitants in the territory) and can be cultivated through 'knowledge' (Sung Wong Toi was frequented by its admirers and should, according to Ho, ideally be visited by others upon its preservation).[162] To this end, what is often interpreted as the expression and the impression of 'Chineseness' concerning the cultural representations of Sung Wong Toi, and the activities around the rock indeed reveal the potentiality in constructing localized 'Chinese' and 'Chineseness.' With an eye to this possibility, I will daringly ask whether and when one can also call this 'Hong Kong' and 'Hongkongness.'

Written in classical Chinese and composed in traditional style, the cultural representations of Sung Wong Toi remain disconnected to the 1919 May Fourth New Culture Movement that took place in mainland China where vernacular Chinese and new modes of literature were promoted alongside with foreign progressive ideas such as science and democracy. Meanwhile, the émigré-literati insisted not only in writing, but also in teaching classical Chinese in the colony. The peculiar self-positioning of this group as the leading Chinese intelligentsia in Hong Kong precisely exposes the complications of the manifold relations and forces involved: On a theoretical level, the advocacy of Chinese classics that symbolizes the return to (of) tradition apparently deviates from the liberal-modernist framework that is underlined in the official master narrative where development and modernization are emphasized in the colony. On the

[162] In reasoning for the significance of Sung Wong Toi in the Legislative Council, Ho Kai expressed the potential of the rock in connecting the "inhabitants of Victoria" who "do not know this place [Sung Wong Toi] sufficiently well" to the territory:

> I hope the public of Hongkong will pay a visit to this place. I am sure they will be amply repaid for their trouble. They can satisfy their curiosity and add to their *knowledge of local matters*. They will find there ancient entrenchments and encampments from which they will learn a good deal of ancient history. (my emphasis)

See, *Hong Kong Hansard*, August 15, 1898, 50.

political level, the émigré-literati's opposition to revolutionary ideas disseminated from China was much welcomed and encouraged by the British authorities, in order to secure and strengthen the colonial governing power. With these in the background, the 'Chineseness' embodied by this Chinese intelligentsia in Hong Kong can be understood as a construction, a performance, and even an imagination that is manifested, in this case, by the emphasis of traditional values, and the use of classical Chinese, and traditional literary style; at the same time, 'Chineseness' is also an apparatus that was strategically calibrated by the colonizer, where only selected traditions and values were disseminated to facilitate the governance of Hong Kong's all-inclusive "Chinese" population in their eyes. "Chinese" in this sense has its long history in the colonial discourse, and is a general name indistinguishably assigned to the non-Western population in the colony.[163] On this background, I agree with Law's multiple, yet no less critical perspectives on the differentiation and the making of "Hong Kong Chinese," however arbitrary the label still is.[164]

From the colonizer's point of view, the simplistic use of "Chinese" and the coupling of this designated "Chineseness" can be regarded as intended strategy with an aim to homogenize differences and individualities. The aforementioned "Chineseness" is indubitably an adaptation, an interpretation and even a translation that reveals and simultaneously governs how 'Chinese' is perceived in colonial Hong Kong—in the context of Hong Kong under British colonialism, colonial experience is distilled in form of biopolitics where 'Chineseness' is *locally* monitored by the

[163] In fact, in many Chinese-language texts, people with a Chinese ethnicity in Hong Kong are referred to as *hua ren* 華人. Although a nationalistic denotation is not directly inscribed in the term, its connotations remain tied to the concept of "Chineseness" and depend on how "Chinese" is interpreted (as an ethnicity, as a connection to a nation, or others). For instance, according to the dictionary edited by the Ministry of Education of Taiwan (*Jiaoyubu xiuding zhongbian guoyu dazidian* 教育部修訂重編國語大字典), *hua ren* is connoted to "luju guowai de Zhongguoren" 旅居國外的中國人 (Chinese living outside the country)—in this case, only that an origin, conveying a sense of an ultimate home country, is implied, but the choice of the home country (mainland China, Taiwan etc.) remains ambiguous and disputable. According to *Hanyu da cidian* 漢語大詞典 (Comprehensive Chinese Word Dictionary) that is compiled in mainland China, *hua* 華 denotes the ethnicity of Han in the ancient context, while *hua ren* 華人 in the modern context is equivalent to "Zhongguoren" 中國人 (Chinese)—in this case, an unsaid equation is indeed struck between Han and Chinese, where a rather Han-centric perspective is revealed. While the terminology in the Chinese context is, on the surface, different from the English one, the same question concerning the term used and its legitimacy is, nonetheless, raised in the end.

[164] In his investigation of the making of Hong Kong Chinese, Law traces how the conceptualization of Chineseness *per se* undergoes transformation upon different socio-political contexts in the history of Hong Kong, with respect to historical happenings in the Qing dynasty, the Republican Era to the People's Republic of China in power after 1949. See, Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 106.

colonial government with *colonial Hong Kong* characteristics, upon its manifestation.[165] With Sung Wong Toi as a point of reference, different identities, experiences, and worlds are lived up by the so-called "Chinese leaders" like Ho Kai and the "Chinese intelligentsia" in which émigré-literati like Chen Botao and Lai Chi-hsi are contained. Contrasting to this is Deng Xiaoping's use of "Xianggang de Zhongguoren" 香港的中國人 (literally "Chinese in Hong Kong," or alternatively "Chinese of Hong Kong") in a speech delivered in June 1984, where his policy of "One Country, Two System" is explained.[166] The amplification of "Zhongguoren" 中國人 (Chinese) places Hong Kong as a mere locale where its locality is irrelevant to identity building. With this in mind, a connection is established and imposed between the (Hong Kong) local to the ('Chinese') national, which is different from the controlled localized connections that were previously approved by the British colonizer to become diffused in the local context. With no doubt, this exposes another project of nation building that Hong Kong is forced to take part in after having participated in the Empire-building project of Britain for more than a century.

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[165] This corresponds to the British Hong Kong government's involvement in engineering a high-profile Hong Kong local identity in the 1970s, as a response to the 1969 Riots that were influenced by the communist party in China.
See, Matthew Turner, "60s/90s: Dissolving the People," in *Hong Kong Sixties: Designing Identity,* eds. Matthew Turner, and Irene Ngan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1994), 13-34.

[166] In referring to the inhabitants of Hong Kong, Deng first used the term "Xianggang de Zhongguoren" 香港的中國人 (Chinese in Hong Kong), while another term "Xianggang ren 香港人," which literally means Hong Kong people, is subsequently used in his speech. With an eye to Deng's potential application of a rhetorical strategy here, the two different terms are, however, used in addressing the same issue concerning the administration of Hong Kong affairs. Instead, it is in the English translation of Deng's speech endorsed by the state-owned Xinhua News Agency and released in 2004 where such intent could be suspected. In the English translated version, the term "Xianggang de Zhongguoren 香港的中國人" is translated into "the Chinese of Hong Kong," and "Xianggang ren" 香港人 to "the people of Hong Kong" except for one line, where Deng's use of "Xianggang ren" becomes "the Chinese in Hong Kong" in the English translated text. This sentence happens to connect Chinese nationalism with the administration of Hong Kong affairs. In the original version, it is written as

> 香港人也是有這種民族自豪感的。香港人是能治理好香港的，要有這個自信心。

whereas in English it is rendered as:

> *The Chinese in Hong Kong* share this sense of national pride. They have the ability to run the affairs of Hong Kong well and they should be confident of that. (my italics)

For the original Chinese version, see:
Xiaoping Deng 鄧小平, "Yige guojia, liangzhong zhidu" 一個國家，兩種制度 [One Country, Two Systems], in *Deng Xiaoping wen xuan di san juan* 鄧小平文選第三卷 [Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping: Volume 3] (Beijing: Remmin chu ban she 人民出版社, 1993), 60.
For the English translation provided by the Xinhua News Agency, see:
"Deng Xiaoping's remarks on "one country, two systems," Xinhua News Agency, February 19, 2004, accessed October 10, 2016, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-02/19/content_1322435.htm.

According to the changing socio-political landscape, and political agendas, the word "Chinese," during the production and the subsequent application of its meanings, reveals different power relations at work in influencing how 'Chinese' *should be* understood; subsequently, on the side of reception and circulation, these procedures shape, and even manipulate how one's relation to the local *should be* ordered. With an eye to the uncovering of these localized relations that are involved in the fabrication of identities and communal connections, is it possible for these relations to break away from being controlled and surveyed, and to form new constellation?

Agency and plurality are keys to approaching this question. In postcolonial criticism, the conscious differentiation of the general "Chinese" and the relatively more specific "Hong Kong Chinese" suggests the active resistance of essentialization, and over-generalization. On a macroscopic level where power relations function, I agree with Law's reading of the colonial government's endorsement of Chinese traditionalism in administering Hong Kong local affairs, and the consequent persistence of Chinese tradition and culture in colonial Hong Kong not only as an example of the "collaborative colonial power," but also as a making of "Hong Kong Chinese."[167] To this end, it is of paramount importance to keep the understanding of "Hong Kong" in "Hong Kong Chinese" open-ended, and pay attention to the participation of things, places, and bodies, be it conscious or unconscious, voluntary or involuntary, without reducing them into mere instruments in the extensive network of relations involved. To this end, the possibilities and the importance of addressing things, places, and bodies involved as different individual subjects are hitherto achieved in this chapter by redistributing agency to Sung Wong Toi as a rock and a place, and the plurality to *yimin*, émigré-literati, and others.

Regardless of the label used, Ho Kai, Chen Botao, and Lai Chi-hsi, nevertheless, reveal the diversity of "Hong Kong Chinese" by being the representative examples of the respective sub-categories to which they belong to and that sometimes overlap with one another (e.g. "Chinese leaders" and "Chinese intelligentsia"). Their voices can, to various degrees, be heard through the records of their writings, speeches, and other historical accounts, even though the representations and interpretations of them are unavoidably a mediation, and are subject to remediation.

[167] Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power*, 106.

Less fortunate are the local majority of the same era, who are silenced by the lack of personal accounts and historical records of their lives in history, as well as in story. No matter what the group is called and how many times the group is renamed, these anonymous people are, to borrow Spivak's insightful criticism, the subaltern subjects who do not have a voice and hence cannot speak.[168] When their voices remain buried, how they fabricated their identities and how they coped with colonialities remains unknown. What is certain is the non-connection between the local majority and the rock, and this explains why a reading cannot be hereby extended to this group, who are neither the "Chinese leaders," nor the "Chinese intelligentsia."

Despite being a "living subaltern heritage," Sung Wong Toi is relatively more fortunate than these voiceless human subalterns: The rock persists its existence in the natural landscape, and pertains its manifold appearances in form of representation at least in the early 20th century; however, the rock gradually becomes a truly "living subaltern heritage"—when it encountered changes in the socio-political landscape and even itself underwent physical changes. Under Japanese occupation in Hong Kong during World War II, a large-scale rock blasting was carried out in Sacred Hill. Sung Wong Toi, among many rocks lying there, was no exception, as neither the rock nor its inscriptions could transmit any meanings or affects to the Japanese. Yet miraculously the part of the rock where the inscription is found survived. When Sacred Hill was completely levelled to give way to the expansion project of Kai Tak Airport in the 1950s, the colonial government relocated Sung Wong Toi to its current location, then shaped into the size of a tablet for preservation, and a memorial garden was built around it. Apart from these formalities, the rock never gathers as much attention as it used to get from the émigré-literati in the early 20th century. The story, however, does not end here.

In 2014, relics were discovered near Sung Wong Toi during the construction work of a new underground railway line. In this unexpected archaeological discovery, more than 500 coins dated back to the Song dynasty, ceramic sherds, stone wells,

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[168] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson, and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-314.
A revised version of this essay can be found in the chapter "History" in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. See,
Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (London: Harvard University Press, 1999).

footpath and other building remains of the Song-Yuan period, and stone structure from the late Qing dynasty and the Republican period were uncovered.[169] These findings not only confirm actual human activities in the Sung Wong Toi area in precolonial (the Song-Yuan period) and colonial (the late Qing period and Republic era of China) Hong Kong, but they also correspond to the different constellations of Sung Wong Toi that speak to aesthetic representations, the formation of different communities, historical significances, and so on. In the postmillennial context, the attention of Sung Wong Toi reappears in the form of an archaeological site, spatializes a series of elapsed times ranging from the Song dynasty, the Yuan dynasty, the Qing Dynasty to the Republican Era across precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial Hong Kong. By borrowing its name to the new railway station, Sung Wong Toi is again tied to the force of modernization, and still cannot part its ways from the entangled forces that involve colonialism, nationalism, and postcolonialism, among others.

Conclusion:
Land and Territory, the Local, and the National

In the postmillennial context, the treatment of Sung Wong Toi is an index of how precolonial history is handled, and how Hong Kong stories are told. As a textbook case of Hong Kong precolonial history, Sung Wong Toi in the post 1997 era cannot escape from being played out in different contexts to fulfil different political agendas.

In many Beijing-backed narratives, the precolonial history of Hong Kong is often used to justify PRC's untraceable ownership of Hong Kong since ancient times, and the transferral of Hong Kong's sovereignty from Britain to China is, by this logic, a rightful, triumphant 'reunification' of the nation.[170] In this aspect, Sung Wong Toi is not only instrumentalized as a diffuser of a 'Chineseness' that is indoctrinated with nationalist sentiments and the state ideologies upheld by the ruling party in mainland China, but it also constellates a Hong Kong-China relationship that is desired by the political regime. This constellation that prioritizes national power and sovereignty is

[169] Development Bureau Transport and Housing Bureau, "Archaeological features discovered at To Kwa Wan Station of the Shatin to Central Link and their proposed preliminary conservation and interpretation plans," Legislative Council Panel on Development, Hong Kong, November 24, 2014, accessed July 21, 2016, 5-7, http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr14-15/english/panels/dev/papers/dev20141125cb1-241-7-e.pdf.
[170] Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong*, 9-10.

contrasted, if not contradictory, to other constellations formed in the early 20th century that defy the rigid, conventional boundaries of nation, citizenship, and nationhood. Moreover, the "China" that the émigré-literati yearned for is different from the "China" that was moulded by the Republican government at that time, not to say the People's Republic of China that was established by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949. In this regard, compressing the Song dynasty (where the royal visit took place), the Yuan dynasty (where the rock became Sung Wong Toi), the Qing dynasty (when Hong Kong was ceded to the British empire), and the political regime (which claims Hong Kong's sovereignty after 1997) into a flat line of continuity is not without a problem. In fact, such construction is highly contested, as it ignores the bumps caused by power transition, political differences, and ideological shifts, and encourages the staunch exercise of a sovereign power that dismisses the potentiality of plurality and the productive aspects of differences. In a critical perspective, this constructed continuity and historicity that 'legitimizes' and empowers the political regime in power to inherit 'China' should be put into question. By exposing the entangled meanings and the contested nature of the term, this critique also calls for the need to go beyond the homogenous understanding of "China" upon any application and reception of the term. Moreover, ideological influences and potential power paradigms at work should always be taken into consideration when interpreting especially the self-representation of "China" that is directly produced, or laterally supported by the state machine (the censorship scheme as one apparatus) [171]—this is, for instance, exposed in the use of Sung Wong Toi to project an all-inclusive "China" that Hong Kong belongs to. On a macroscopic level, the land is revealed to be a source of agency that marks the physical territory of a nation, and brings the nation(-state) as a political idea, a political regime into materialization, where the impression and the experience of living on the same land constitutes the imagination of a nation in terms of belonging and sharing. As Spivak eagerly calls for looking at the postcolonial world with a planetary view, land in general that makes up the planet and a land in specific that makes up a nation

[171] In putting forward the concept of Sinophone as a field of study, Shih Shu-mei discusses how the empire-building process in ancient China and the nation-building project of the People's Republic of China in the 20th century can be viewed as "continental colonialism" (711-713). Shih also points out that narratives that are built on self-victimization (for instance, in face of Western acts of agression in the late 19th century and the early 20th century) are an easy source of a nationalistic historiography. See, Shu-mei Shih, "The Concept of Sinophone," *Journal of the Modern Language Association of America* 126 no. 3 (May 2011): 709–718.

remind one of Timothy Morton's description of a "hyperobject" as "things that are massively distributed in time and space relative to humans"[172] and "genuine nonhuman objects that are not simply the products of a human gaze."[173] The discussion of Sung Wong Toi, relative to this on a microscopic local level, has nonetheless prepared the ground for the shift of scale in this macroscopic view. Not in his intent or his subject of discussion, but Morton's emphasis on the "nonlocal"[174] nature of the hyperobject can be read as an allegory that exposes the simultaneous similiarity and disparity between the land-as-local alignment and the direct land-to-nation identification: Despite their similiar ways of operation, the former is usually found in *petits récits*, while the latter is often employed in the grand narrative; the former is measured in human's time, while the latter deals with the chronotope of a nation—this tendency can be commonly spotted in many nation-building myths where "time immemorial" is accounted. To this end, this allegory actually explains the nation-over-local projection of Sung Wong Toi in early-20th century Hong Kong, as the rock was connected not to the situated temporality of the present (local time), but the dynastic cycle of imperial China, where a concept like local is, *de facto*, made unavailable by this logic of the nation.

Even though there is seemingly no such concept like local in the early 20th century as compared to how it is discussed in the contemporary world, the

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[172] Morton's "hyperobject" is characterized by five qualities, namely viscosity, nonlocality, temporal undulation, phasing and interobjectivitiy:

> They are viscous, which means that they 'stick' to beings that are involved with them. They are nonlocal; in other words, any "local manifestation" of a hyperobject is not directly the hyperobject. They involve profoundly different temporalities than the human-scale ones we are used to. In particular, some very large hyperobjects, such as planets, have genuinely Gaussian temporality: they generate spacetime vortices, due to general relativity. Hyperobjects occupy a high-dimensional phase space that results in their being invisible to humans for stretches of time. And they exhibit their effects interobjectively; that is, they can be detected in a space that consists of interrelationships between aesthetic properties of objects."

Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 1.

[173] Ibid., 199.

[174] I treat "nonlocal" as an 'allegory' instead of a 'justification' here, since Morton understands nonlocality from the angle of quantum physics where neutrality and objectivity is emphasized. Moreover, Morton discusses nonlocality in the context of "very large objects." For instance, global warming has to be assessed in the scale of the Earth, whereas a localized vantage point is not enough to see its full manifestation. Morton's theorization of "hyperobject" is not without any controversy.

reinterpretation of Sung Wong Toi and the remediation of its representations in the postmillennial era help us to understand different possible and impossible stagings of local at different times and on different levels. As it is shown, Sung Wong Toi was of little significance in the colonial discourse; however, even when Sung Wong Toi is acknowledged in some other contexts (e.g. Chinese patriotic scholarship), it does not necessarily yield to a direct recognition of any local distinctiveness, or local subjectivity of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, this complexity makes the analysis of Sung Wong Toi as a rock as well as a place—with its manifold appearances in the physical environment, cultural presentations, and historical accounts—entangled with a rhizomatic network of different intermedial, intertexual, intersubjective, and interobjective relations. The different worlds constellated by Sung Wong Toi and its perceivers across time and through space reveal different sets of value, ideology, mentality, identity, and perspective at work on the cultural, social, and political levels. With an eye to the formation of different connectivities and affinities that is facilitated by different animate and inanimate agencies, local in the analysis partaken in this chapter is interpreted as different localized relations—previously unnamed, localized relations are different from other oft-discussed topics such as local consciousness and localism, as these "localized relations" are not consciously constructed, but are revealed in agencies like things and places, and their reconfigured connection with their human counterparts. The localized relations unfolded in the case of Sung Wong Toi offer alternatives, for instance, to go beyond the understanding of nationalism and colonialism as a dichotomy in a colonial space, and the rigid boundaries set up by sweeping terms such as "Chinese" and "Chineseness" in different contexts. At last, the attachment to a thing and/or a place can be read potentially as another localized relation that is established with and to the land itself. Depending on the scale (which is, inevitably, an arbitrary), the attachment to a local piece of land can be interpreted as local sentiments and belonging, while land can also be associated with a nation through the representation of territory. In this regard, the local and the national indeed exist in a continuum, and are relative to one another.

In the next chapter, I will complement this tale of two rocks by probing into Lion Rock, another rock which is also a locale in Hong Kong. How Lion Rock becomes an icon of Hong Kong since the 1970s reveals an overt expression of Hong

Kong localness that is subject to enchantment, disenchantment, and reenchantment at different times. Lion Rock will ultimately help to explore how the so-called "Chinese" in the population would come to establish local connection with the land, and take up the name of "Hongkonger."

Chapter 4 - A Tale of Two Rocks (II): The Enchantment, Disenchantment, and Reenchantment of Lion Rock

Local attention was drawn to the lesser-known, or even largely unknown, existence of the city's own baseball team upon the theatrical release of Steve Chi-fat Chan's directorial debut *Weeds on Fire* in 2016. The film, as a local production with limited budget, is inspired by a series of true events that involves how Leo Kwong-fai Lu, the then principal of Kei Kok Primary School, came to establish a youth baseball team in his school in 1982. Named the "Sand Martins (or sometimes "Shatin Martins"[175]) and coached by Lu himself, the team consisted of over twenty school children who were considered by their teachers to be 'beyond repair.' While baseball was at that time mostly played by expatriate communities like the Japanese and Americans in the city, "Sand Martins," disadvantaged by the lack of attention, experience, and resources from the very first moment of its establishment, miraculously won the Hong Kong Little League championship in 1983 against a stronger, and more experienced team. To commemorate this victory, the British Hong Kong Government named the longest bridge over the Shing Mun River Channel in Shatin as the "Sand Martin Bridge" after the name of this baseball team.[176]

With the above mentioned serving as the blueprint, *Weeds on Fire* made several alterations in its storyboard: instead of a team of primary school children, Sand Martins in the film becomes a group of teenage students, while Lu (played by Liu Kai-chi) remains as their principal and coach in the fictional Kei Kok Secondary School. The problems faced by these adolescents on their way to adulthood, ranging from family issues, love relationship, unplanned and unexpected pregnancy, to triad's influence, infuse the film with dramatic climaxes, in order to complement the monotonous movements of baseball training. These additional (melo)dramatic elements thus conjure up different coming-of-age stories of the protagonists. Intriguingly, bittersweetness in the film is not only suggested by the reconstruction of

[175] The first Chinese character in the name Shatin literally means "sand."
[176] Lawrence Kam-chuen Lee 李錦泉, "A Brief History of Hong Kong Baseball" 香港棒球運動簡史, Hong Kong Baseball Association, accessed November 29, 2016, https://www.hkbaseball.org/load.php?link_id=205679.

the past according to the memories of Ah Lung (played by Lam Yiu-sing), the pitcher of the baseball team; but it is also distilled in the situated moment when Ah Lung, now in his adulthood, walking through the occupy site in time of the Umbrella Movement, recalls a past that he realizes is indeed inextricable from the past of the city. In other words, the coming-of-age story of the Sand Martins is indeed bracketed by the socio-political changes experienced by the city from the 1980s in which the story was set to the year 2014 where the film was shot. This deliberation is made explicit by a change made to a factual detail which can otherwise be followed without any difficulty—the film intentionally shifts the year of the establishment of the Sand Martin to two years later in 1984, thus justifying the use of real-life footages taken from the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration in the opening of the film. This political reference certainly poses a stark contrast to the young, naïve protagonists who are shown unaware of the anxiety and the uncertainty that fill up the society at the time of their adolescent period, as they are busy in experiencing different tastes of life. Not until the end of the film, reference is again made to the socio-political landscape of Hong Kong, but this time in the postcolonial, postmillennial Hong Kong. On the eve of the 30th anniversary of the baseball team, the audience, with the help of the camera, is invited to follow the footsteps of Ah Lung and walk through the occupy site in Admiralty during the Umbrella Movement. Lying between the two monumental events that move Hong Kong and its people to varying degrees is indubitably the 1997 handover of Hong Kong which serves simultaneously as an outcome as well as a cause to the two events. In this regard, the film—by adapting the story of a local baseball team in cinema—actually recounts other stories, experiences, and sediments that come drifting and become entangled under the handover of Hong Kong, and beyond. Albeit all the dramas and the changes taking place in the lives of the protagonists and in the city they live in, overlooking the baseball pitch where training and competitions take place is Lion Rock 獅子山—as a rock, a locale as well as a household symbol of Hong Kong localness, Lion Rock always maintains a distance to the arena of real action, but nonetheless poses its recurring presence throughout the film and also in Hong Kong society for real (e.g. its presence in the Umbrella Movement).

With *Weeds on Fire* as an entry point, Lion Rock fills up the second part of

the tale(s) of two rocks wherein Hong Kong localnesses are varyingly conceived and perceived through different constellations of things, places, and bodies. While *Weeds on Fire* offers only one out of many other perspectives in looking at Lion Rock, different cultural reverberations of Lion Rock—as embodiments of a myriad of Hong Kong localnesses—are to be examined in this chapter. In different moments and contexts where different Hong Kong stories are recounted, Lion Rock, albeit its largely consistent appearance, is interpreted and perceived differently; in postcolonial, postmillennial Hong Kong, the rock encounters several upheavals of being disowned and disregarded as a symbol of Hong Kong by different groups in different occasions; meanwhile, diversified (postcolonial) sensibilities that are injected into Lion Rock varyingly rejuvenate it into a remediated symbol as well as manifestation of localness with different implications at different times. With an eye to these changing moments, I trace in this chapter not only the reciprocal relationship between the Lion Rock situated in real life and the countless Lion Rocks appeared in representations, but also the operation of enchantment, disenchantment, and reenchantment that envelops and is enveloped by the continuous remediation of Lion Rock(s) in texts as well as in the situated reality.

Another Rock, Another Hong Kong Story

Named after the shape of its ridges, Lion Rock is a mountain with an elevation of 495 meters that lies between Kowloon and the New Territories of Hong Kong. Like Sung Wong Toi, Lion Rock marks its appearance in the physical world as well as cultural representations; unlike Sung Wong Toi, Lion Rock is still very much talked about in today's Hong Kong and is generally understood by the local population as a synonym for "Hong Kong spirit," a site of collective memory, and a symbol of Hong Kong localness at large in different real-life occasions as well as in texts (see Table 2.1 of Chapter 2). In other words, Lion Rock over the course of time has become a public imagination of Hong Kong across the political, cultural, and social spheres, and through cultural representation, translation, and mediation.

Fig 4.1 Lion Rock and the neighbourhood below the Lion Rock

Lion Rock's entry to the world of texts started with the television programme *Below the Lion Rock* (獅子山下), which was first aired in 1973 in the government-financed channel Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and would continue to run, on and off, for more than 40 years of time into postmillennial Hong Kong. When the programme was first produced in the early 1970s, below the Lion Rock, geographically speaking, is a neighbourhood mainly inhabited by the working class and underprivileged. By depicting realistically the livelihood of people struggling for a living below the Lion Rock, the programme constitutes the *petite histoires* of the local population where the stories of different Hong Kong personae are told from their individual perspectives, thus generating a multitude of local-oriented angles in looking at Hong Kong under British colonialism. By addressing the hardship and social problems faced by different walks of life, the programme correlates the condition below the Lion Rock to a collective experience shared by the local population at large, whether one is geographically living below the Lion Rock or not. This bottom-up construction of a Hong Kong through the 'body' of Lion Rock calls for the significances in the collectiveness shared among Hong Kong people in fabricating a local identity, and simultaneously the attention to the distinctiveness of a Hong Kong local culture which is proven to be present in these processes of representation and interpretation. As the program continues to gain popularity and generate resonance among the local audience across the generations, the Lion Rock in

narratives overtakes the Lion Rock in reality from the moment when Lion Rock residing in the natural landscape is perceived not entirely as a geological formation, but as a thing as well as a place that is studded with cultural connotations (e.g. a symbol of Hong Kong, a manifestation of Hong Kong localness).

What is equally important is the deviant characteristic that is embodied in the cultural translation of Lion Rock, where its meanings are induced and its cultural movements are steered. When the British Hong Kong Government commissioned the production of the programme, a propagandist purpose to promote government's policies was an intent; however, by the concerted efforts and the collaborative actions of the conscientious creative team, the programme finally acquired a sharp social critical angle, and became something totally different from what the authority had planned for upon the initiation of the project.[177] What the programme has amassed in the past forty years is described by RTHK as the following:

> *Below the Lion Rock* witnesses the growth of Hong Kong. It represents the spirit of the people, riding through many ups and downs together to face the challenges.[178]

To this end, the programme not only subverted the homogenous official narrative of Hong Kong that was headed by a colonialist perspective during the time of its inauguration, but also brought to light the under-presentation of the local.

In addition to televisual representation, the Cantonese theme song of the programme, released in 1979, also participates in the cultural translation and mediation of affects and experiences in connection with Lion Rock in cultural representations and the situated reality. The song—co-created by composer Joseph Koo and lyricist James Wong—is performed by Roman Tam, whose star image from then on cannot be separated from this song and the image of Lion Rock. Sharing the same title with the series, the song not only condenses the televised images in its lyrics, it simultaneously provides a commentary to the social reality portrayed "below the Lion Rock." As the chorus constantly reminds the audience of the atmosphere built up in the long-running series:

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[177] Cheuk, 48.

[178] "Below the Lion Rock: DISCover Design Competition," Radio and Television Hong Kong, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.rthk.org.hk/downloads/lionrock/eng/index.html.

Of one mind in pursuit of our dream,
All discord set aside, with one heart on the same bright quest,
Fearless and valiant inside.
Hand in hand to the ends of the Earth,
Rough terrain no respite,
Side by side we overcome ills,
As the Hong Kong story we write. [179]

This picture where Hong Kong people are imagined to share the same boat envisions the formation of a local community, and engenders a Hong Kong local identity. The idea of being bound together at difficult times speaks of and to the personae depicted in the television programme where the local colonized subjects are recognized and honoured as dream catchers and writers of their own stories. With the emphasized use of the first person and plural pronouns in the lyrics, the song builds up a network of local relations that encourage people to play a part in the Hong Kong story revised.

To further resist the hegemony of the grand narrative under British colonialism, these Hong Kong stories, as an alternative to the official account, are told in a language spoken by the locals. The oft-quoted line, "we find one another below the Lion Rock" (我地大家在獅子山下相遇上), is one example from the lyrics, where the colloquial Cantonese expression "*ngo dei*" 我地 is employed to produce genuine local articulations. More than just this, the pronoun "we" expressed in this line is compositely made up of two terms "*ngo dei*" 我地 and "*da kar*" 大家 that pertain the same meaning, and are usually used separately. Lyricist James Wong, reputed for his adept writing skills and language proficiency, could not have committed tautology by mistake. Albeit the apparent redundancy, the skilful coupling of the two self-sufficient terms intensifies the sense of togetherness, which echoes the persisting presence of Lion Rock and the repeated image of sharing the same boat in other parts of the lyrics—such as in another signature line "below the Lion Rock we

[179] The original lyrics in Chinese are: 放開彼此心中矛盾 理想一起去追/ 同舟人世相隨 無畏更無懼/ 同處海角天邊 攜手踏平崎嶇/ 我地大家 用艱辛努力寫下那 不朽香江名句。
The English translation of the lyrics are provided by the following newspaper article:
Chris Yeung, "Lion Rock," *South China Morning Post*, March 3, 2003, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/article/407911/lion-rock.

share the same boat" (既是同舟在獅子山下且共濟). Upon its circulation, the song as a whole spells out an alternative presence of Lion Rock in an audial landscape where the cultural currency and connotations bestowed on Lion Rock in the television programme are propagated and reinforced.

By lighting up the aura of even the most ordinary beings (be it things, places, or bodies) in the society, attention, significances, and identities are attributed to those who are, otherwise, overlooked by the grand narrative; by distributing agencies to these local beings (as writers of Hong Kong stories), the colonialist hierarchy where historical writing is dictated by the victor/colonizer/human is destabilized. In all these instances, the cultural agency of Lion Rock, as a rock as well as a place, is proven to be present: Not only that the local inhabitants of the city find their common intersection in Lion Rock in cultural representations as well as in real life, but the local orientation and sensibility that characterise Hong Kong localness at that time also find expression in Lion Rock, which is present in texts as well as in reality.

A Thing and A Place: The Agency of Lion Rock

Mediated by various cultural forms such as visual images, lyrics, and melody, Lion Rock exerts its presence and significance mutually in the natural as well as the cultural landscapes. With its material presence in the physical environment and its multiple appearances actualized by means of cultural production and consumption, Lion Rock travels across different spheres and contexts bearing the qualities of a thing, a place, and a sign at the same time. On the one hand, (below the) Lion Rock constellates a Hong Kong local identity and its constituent qualities such as endurance and perseverance that are distilled from the Hong Kong stories depicted in the television programme as well as in theme song. On the other hand, the Hong Kong identity conveyed and the distinctive characteristics it carries valorise Lion Rock into a bearer of cultural significances and connotations. A reciprocal relation can hereby be unfolded: Local as an abstraction finds materialization in Lion Rock as a thing as well as a place of material quality that possesses a physical dimension, and through different bodies living below the Lion Rock, which enact the Hong Kong local identity. Meanwhile, Lion Rock—originally as a nameless rock in abundance in nature—becomes a meaningful place and acquires specific cultural meanings in

connection to Hong Kong's local. As a result, Lion Rock and localness can no longer be separated in the ongoing process of cultural production, consumption, and remediation. To this end, Lion Rock not only establishes its intermedial presences between texts, but also participates in cultural movements that take place between the world of texts and the situated reality. The cultural agency of Lion Rock is thereby reciprocally a cause as well as a resonance of the perceivable and material impacts cast by different appearances of Lion Rock in different realms and across different times.

Having its agency acknowledged, Lion Rock exhibits qualities of a thing, a place, as well as a cultural sign that embodies and is simultaneously capable of inducing various degrees of Hong Kong localnesses. The first-hand experience of anthropologist Gordon Mathews in encountering Lion Rock in an everyday life scenario precisely tells us so:

> [a]t the close of the dinner, the assembled group of owners [of Chungking Mansions] sang, in accented Cantonese, "Under the Lion Rock," a song that is emblematic of being a Hong Konger. These immigrants from China were singing a song to proclaim their Hong Kong identity […] the owners were in effect saying, "Through decades of struggle, we too have become Hong Kongers."[180]

Like Mathews, one might as well be startled by the randomness of such an act. Regardless of the efficiency of this identity-making procedure, this real-life situation outlines eloquently the travelling of Lion Rock and its connotations across different media in texts and in everyday life. The reciprocal relationship aforementioned is again confirmed: On the one hand, the rock's embodiment of Hong Kong spirit and identity, which is achieved by means of cultural production and consumption, enables Hong Kong localness to be articulated and manifested across media, texts, and realities; on the other hand, experiences amassed from the everyday life and affects such as togetherness and perseverance are rejuvenated and re-injected into Lion Rock

[180] Gordon Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 39.

during the circulation and the remediation of different representations and interpretations.

The cultural agency of Lion Rock is thereby demonstrated to be re-creatable and pertain a creative power—when people who are not *de facto* "Hongkonger" in a nativist sense but wish to become one seek for recognition from *the* Lion Rock, their attempt to fabricate identity thereby reveals not only the highly performative and illusory nature of identity, but also the role of Lion Rock in translating and transmitting intangible qualities like Hong Kong localness into physical actions that would yield to material impacts. I argue that Lion Rock as a thing and a place residing in the natural environment of the physical reality is a source of its materiality that adorned the rock with agency and significance across different spheres: By singing "Below the Lion Rock," Lion Rock is believed to have revoked, and is deemed in the real-life example provided by Mathews a manifestation of Hong Kong localness which facilitates the fabrication of identity and community building. The actual impacts, be it psychological, cultural, or physical, cast on these individuals reveal not only the malleable materiality Lion Rock enjoys by its multiple presences in different media and in the physical world, but also the importance of such material dimension in engaging intangible cultural connotations and concepts like Hong Kong localness in ongoing processes of translation and transmission.

This discussion hitherto confirms Lion Rock as a nonhuman agency at work, and reveals a matrix of reciprocal and rhizomatic relations in connection to Lion Rock that are entangled in the world of text and the situated reality. By traveling across different worlds and media, Lion Rock is continuously supplied with cultural significances, and simultaneously diffuses cultural meanings to provoke cultural imagination, where new representations and interpretations are generated to complicate the former. In this regard, how Lion Rock constellates Hong Kong's local from the 1970s to the postmillennial era indeed marks a major difference from the case of Sung Wong Toi that was examined in the previous chapter, albeit the similarity in their operational logic as a nonhuman agency. With Sung Wong Toi as a comparative case study, I demonstrate in the following how the currency of a thing, a place, or a body (in this case, Lion Rock and the constellations of the three it invokes) through space and across time are determining factor in facilitating circulation,

translation, and remediation.

The Cultural Currency of Lion Rock

Outside the literati's circle, little was known about Sung Wong Toi, inasmuch as little interest was paid to the rock (with Ho Kai as an exceptional case). Demonstrated in the previous chapter is the reciprocal interrelationship between Sung Wong Toi and the Chinese intellectual community in Hong Kong: While the literati contributed much to shaping Sung Wong Toi into a physical site as well as an intellectual site of cultural and historical significances, their community was, in return, consolidated by the affinity they shared towards the rock; however, the cultural and historical connotations that were bestowed to Sung Wong Toi through these activities only appealed to this particular community of émigré-literati who were capable of decoding (as well as encoding) the specific meanings and messages in connection to the rock. In other words, although Sung Wong Toi can speak to these men of letter, the same rock could mean something else or nothing much to others outside the group. With regard to this, I will further examine in the next chapter the different readerships of Hong Kong localness with the help of the different spectatorships engendered by the film *Ten Years*; for the time being, this line of difference between Sung Wong Toi and Lion Rock offers a moment of reflection.

In contrast to Sung Wong Toi, Lion Rock as a cultural model persists over a longer period of time, where it engenders—relatively—a much wider range of cultural connotations, and—reciprocally—a wider spectrum of interpretation and imagination that are then disseminated across the generations and in different contexts. Meanwhile, the mediation and remediation of Lion Rock also involve the participation of more agencies, both human and nonhuman. In a nutshell, all these not only complicate the processes of cultural production and consumption of Lion Rock; precisely owing to this, Lion Rock has never ceased to propagate and evolve in the changing socio-political landscape of Hong Kong. In this regard, Mathews' field record dated in 2011 is a proof of the fluid circulation of Lion Rock in the forty years after the television programme and its theme song were created. In view of the contrasting impacts cast by the two rocks in the local landscape, the ongoing process of cultural production and consumption, where representation and interpretation,

mediation and imagination are involved, is the key to keeping all these human and nonhuman agencies active and visible—in other words, it is the cultural currency earned by Lion Rock that enables it and its cultural reverberations to propagate in different media, through time, and across space.

In addition to this, what shall not be dismissed is the role played by academia in facilitating the circulation of Lion Rock and the mediation of its cultural significances. Reciprocally, Lion Rock itself as an agency also encourages the formation of such a scholarship where Lion Rock, as a focus of study, is subject to constant remediation. Over the years, scholars unanimously agree with the impacts and the significances of Lion Rock in Hong Kong culture: The television programme *Below the Lion Rock* is, for instance, treated as an important testimony to the rise of Hong Kong local identity and culture during the 1970s and the 1980s. In addition to this, the production of the programme is known to have nurtured young talents in the local cultural scene, thus catalysing the emergence of the Hong Kong New Wave that introduced local perspectives into cultural representations and grounded the foundation of Hong Kong local culture in the 1970s and the 1980s. Directors like Ann Hui and Alan Fong, who had made artistic contributions to *Below the Lion Rock*, both became pioneers of this cultural movement.[181] In particular, Hui's "Boy from Vietnam" (1978) made for the *Below the Lion Rock* series becomes the first instalment of her "Vietnam Trilogy" that examines the impacts of the Vietnamese War, and the plight of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong during the 1970s and the 1980s. Like Hui, Fong had also developed a sharp and humanistic angle in depicting the social reality of Hong Kong in the episodes he contributed to the *Below the Lion Rock* series, including but not limited to "Ode to Un Chau Chai" (1976), "The Wild Child" (1977), "Old Plough" (1978), and "Choice Of Dreams" (1978). This aspiration to reveal social problems and expose the underrepresented side of the society led both Hui and Fong to the film industry, where they were joined by other emerging directors like Tsui Hark and Tam Ka-ming in renewing what they considered to be outdated in representations, generic forms, and conventions in Hong Kong at that time. Despite their diversified styles, subject matters, and target audiences, their

[181] Kar Law, "An Overview of Hong Kong Cinema," in *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*. Ed. Ching-Mei Esther Yau (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 42.

works speak of their shared vision in recognising different local subjects and agencies that constitute the local culture, or in other words, a prevailing form of Hong Kong localness at work at their time.[182] These concerted efforts in producing a variety of Hong Kong stories from bottom-up perspectives called upon different local subjectivities and local voices. In this regard, scholars tend to read Hong Kong New Wave and the trend of social criticism as a coming-of-age of a generation in establishing their own identities and situating Hong Kong as their home under British colonialism.[183] In all these instances, Lion Rock, as a shared condition and no less an actual rock in reality, posits a site that accommodates all these local sensibilities, including the prevailing trend in academia in associating the *Below the Lion Rock* series to the cultural and social development of Hong Kong. In other words, the rereading I hitherto demonstrated is indeed a meta-reading that indicates how cultural representations and the academic scrutinization of these representations reciprocally reinforce the agency and the cultural significances of Lion Rock. To this end, Lion Rock not only encompasses the changing experiences of living in Hong Kong against different socio-political backdrops, but it also hosts creative and interpretive dimensions that enable cultural workers and cultural critics to posit their different stories and readings of the stories respectively.

This local sensibility, which was manifested through Lion Rock for the first time in the 1970s, had never been so strong in the past, vis-à-vis the Chinese literati's adherence to Chinese continental history and culture, instead of the local, in the example of Sung Wong Toi—in this case, Lion Rock in the 1970s did serve as an outlet to these collective emotions. Meanwhile, the connection between Lion Rock and Hong Kong localness(es) is further consolidated over time by rereading and remediation: This is, for instance, achieved by retrospective readings in the form of academic scholarship and others, where the eruption of local sentiments in the 1970s (through Lion Rock) is acknowledged as an important milestone in founding a Hong

[182] Ibid., 31-70.
[183] Ping-kwan Leung, "Urban City and the Cultural Identity of Hong Kong," in *Between Home and World: A Reader in Hong Kong Cinema*, ed. Esther M.K. Cheung and Yiu-wai Chu (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2004), 383.

Kong local identity.[184] In this regard, this "imagined community" in Benedict Anderson's sense not only connects those that share the same time-space with one another (so to speak, the generation living below the lion rock in the 1970s), but also stretches out to include those across time and through space (different generations of writers, scholars, and readers that participate in the remediation of Lion Rock).[185] With a view to redistribute agencies and significances among things, places, and bodies, these "imagined communities," after all, grant membership not just to humans but also to nonhumans, where Sung Wong Toi and Lion Rock, among others, are included in constituting Hong Kong.

The Post-1997 Trajectories of Lion Rock

For more than forty years, Lion Rock continues to be an active cultural agent and phenomenon in Hong Kong with persistent socio-cultural impacts. In particular, the long-running television series *Below the Lion Rock* oversees colonial-postcolonial transition of the city. In 2006, renowned directors such as Derek Yee and Eric Tsang, alongside with scriptwriters such as Ivy Ho and Aubrey Oi-wai Lam, were invited to expand the landmark series; in 2014, the signature programme was selected to inaugurate the free-to-air television channel *RTHK 31*, where over 124 episodes of the series were rerun, with the addition of commentaries provided by cultural critics and cultural workers in selected episodes. In the same year, feature film directors Lawrence Lau, Ivy Ho, and Mak Hei-yan introduced new angles, generic variations, and narrative complexity to the new episodes of the series. Released in 2015, the latest episodes explore contemporary social issues and happenings in Hong Kong—ranging from economic difficulties and housing issues to the Umbrella Movement. In all these instances, it is surprising to see not only the ongoing expansion of the programme during the past forty years and more; but also the accumulative attention it receives from society where new issues are raised, and chains of nostalgic sentiments are aroused from time to time. The ongoing currency of Lion Rock in

[184] Law Wing-sang, for instance, sees the 1970s as the formation period of the "first wave of Hong Kong consciousness." See, Wing-sang Law 羅永生, "Xianggang bentu yishi de qianshi jinsheng" 香港本土意識的前世今生 [The Present and the Past of Hong Kong Local Consciousness], *Reflexion* 思想 26 (October 2014): 113-142.

[185] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

Hong Kong is therefore evident. In this regard, the attention attributed to the series and the energy injected to rejuvenate it not only reveal the role of the series in the development of Hong Kong culture and local identity over the years, but also expose the continuous bestowal of cultural meanings to Lion Rock upon the generation of new representations and the renewal of previously established images. Not surprisingly, the continual propagation of Lion Rock is not only partaken in the television industry, but also on an everyday life basis. As mentioned, the eyewitness account of Mathews offers a microscopic example that demonstrates Lion Rock's involvement of the identity politics of Hong Kong. On the macroscopic level, Lion Rock is connoted to the "Lion Rock spirit," which is generally understood as equivalent to a "Hong Kong spirit" upheld by people in Hong Kong, and is often considered to be a key to Hong Kong's 'success.'[186] In this regard, rendering the Lion Rock spirit as a "core value" of Hong Kong further confirms the travelling of Lion Rock between the cultural, social, and political realms, and the extensive usage and influence of the rock—from the neighbourhood below the Lion Rock to the society as a whole.

Moreover, Lion Rock is often borrowed in times of crisis in the post-1997 era, with an aim to call for solidarity (as a collective whole below the Lion Rock) and perseverance (as the Lion Rock spirit suggests); meanwhile, Lion Rock—with its legacy rooted in the 1970s and its active engagement in processes of cultural production and consumption in Hong Kong—also becomes a storage place of past memories and nostalgic sentiments in the postmillennial era. For instance, the lyrics of "Below the Lion Rock" were quoted in the Financial Budget presentation made by the Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR Government Anthony Kam-chung Leung in 2002, where Hong Kong people were asked to stay put in face of government's deficits, payment cuts, and tax increase during the economic downturn;[187] during the epidemic outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003, the song was frequently heard on radio and television channels while

[186] Helen F. Siu, "Positioning the Margins: The Infra-Power of Middle Class Hong Kong," in *Diasporic Histories: Cultural Archives of Chinese Transnationalism*, ed. by Andrea Riemenschnitter, and Deborah L. Madsen (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 2009), 59.
[187] "The 2002-03 Budget Speech by the Financial Secretary, The Hon Antony Leung moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 2002," March 6, 2002, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.budget.gov.hk/2002/eframe2.htm.

its lyrics were recited in different occasions, with a view to raise the population's morale in combating the then-unknown virus that claimed away lives unexpectedly in the city. Meanwhile, the potential of Lion Rock in soliciting nostalgia was shown when Roman Tam 羅文 (1945-2002), the singer who popularized the song "Below the Lion Rock," passed away in 2002—in tributes paid to this "Godfather of Cantopop," Lion Rock transmits nostalgic sentiments in the society by crediting Tam's lifelong artistic output for the development of Hong Kong popular culture on the one hand, and correlating Tam's life story to a story of the epoch that is shared by everyone living below the Lion Rock.

The discussion insofar has demonstrated how different cultural reverberations of Lion Rock reflect, and, at the same time, facilitate its fluid cultural currency, such that the multiple appearances of Lion Rock in the cultural, social, and political scenes are not only limited to the above mentioned (also see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2). Likewise, the impacts cast by these cultural reverberations are not limited to the level of the text: Lion Rock—for being deemed a manifestation of Hong Kong localness, for instance, in the fabrication of a local identity—is not only an outcome of its remediation ceaselessly undertaken in different contexts; but this also reveals the chained effects and the material impacts cast by Lion Rock(s) across different realms. No longer just as the 'localized relations' that were discussed in the previous chapter, explicit local relations formed in connection to Lion Rock reveal concrete local inscriptions (localnesses) that are perceivable and circulatable in the population.

Lion Rock (Narratives) at a Crossroads

When Lion Rock continues to run on the cultural connotations it has acquired since the 1970s, Lion Rock under these conventions characterises a Hong Kong localness that has become an accumulative 'norm,' which is often applied in describing a Hong Kong unbeatable spirit, and a Hong Kong local identity. These normative Lion Rock narratives portray 'representative' Hong Kong personae, where the ideal Hong Kong identity and values are inserted. In the following, narratives that connect cultural icons like Roman Tam and Anita Mui to Lion Rock provide important clues to elaborate this process of normalization.

As it is mentioned earlier, the death of Roman Tam in 2002 had stirred up a

series of past memories and nostalgic sentiments in the society. On the one hand, it reveals how Tam was connected to Hong Kong as a whole by means of Lion Rock. On the other hand, Lion Rock and Roman Tam constellate the 'good old days' of Hong Kong which was glorified by the media and reminisced by the local population.[188] In the following year, a similar phenomenon can be observed—not only due to the plague of SARS, but also with the unexpected suicide of Leslie Cheung 張國榮 (1956-2003) and the premature death of Anita Mui 梅艷芳 (1963-2003), two legendary icons of Hong Kong popular culture. When thousands of fans lined up at Cheung's memorial service[189]—disregarding the health warnings issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Hong Kong government—to bid farewell to their idol, this shared moment of mourning not only gave rise to a rare occasion of physical proximity during the SARS outbreak, but also reveals that the impacts imposed by the local popular culture actually overrode the menace of a fatal virus. In other words, these psychological and cultural impacts, albeit their intangible and unquantifiable nature, are no less powerful than the visible and measurable ones (for instance, the SARS virus). What is intriguing is that: When the local population in face of change treated the consecutive deaths of these cultural icons as crises, Lion Rock was more than once invoked as a response, or to a certain extent, as a defence mechanism by reinstating what remained unchanged amidst the change (death as disappearance in this case)—under scrutiny, stabilizing agents are contained in what I call the "Lion Rock narratives," where the particular Hong Kong spirit, local identity, and values that Lion Rock embodies are disseminated in these narratives.

A typical model of a "Lion Rock narrative" can be found in the life stories recounted for Roman Tam and Anita Mui, where they are modelled into an ideal, larger-than-life Hong Kong persona. In these narratives, their struggles through obstacles, their perseverance through hardship, and their keen pursuits of dreams are not only portrayed in great lengths, but also depicted to be worthwhile by the rewarding return of success, recognition and popularity. For instance, in an exhibition entitled "Applauding Hong Kong Pop Legend: Roman Tam" 獅子山下・掌聲響起

[188] Lisa Odham Stokes, *Historical Dictionary of Hong Kong Cinema* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 410.
[189] Winnie Chung, "Leslie Cheung's Final Journey," *South China Morning Post*, April 9, 2003, accessed October 10, 2016. http://www.scmp.com/article/411981/leslie-cheungs-final-journey.

• 羅文 that ran from December 2011 to July 2012 in the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Tam's life is described in a glorifying tone:

> Roman came to Hong Kong from Guangzhou *on his own* in 1962. He found employment *as a gatekeeper* at the Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park and then *a bank clerk*. *With his passion and determination for music and the stage*, Roman formed a band to perform English pop songs in bars and lounges. He progressed to being a backstage singer for local films, where he attracted attention for his vocal skills in his interpretation of mandarin songs and reached the height of his career with Cantopop. His artistic talents then extended to the musical stage![190] (my emphasis)

The reference to Lion Rock is not only made in the Chinese title of the exhibition (although it is missing in the English version); but it is also explicitly applied to conclude the life of Tam and its significances as a "take-home" message:

> The *trajectory* and the *detours* of his artistic journey mark the development not only of Hong Kong's pop scene, but also of *local culture*. *Braving every storm*, he went beyond *a promising future* to fulfil all of his potential. The sound of our applause will continue to ring out in praise of his amazing voice and *dauntless spirit*. *Roman's attitude to life* will continue to *encourage and inspire us from under the Lion Rock*.[191] (my emphasis)

The inseparable connection of Tam and Lion Rock is also envisioned in a stamp set issued by the Hongkong Post in 2010, where Tam is featured as one of the five most representative Cantopop stars in the history of Hong Kong. Not surprisingly, the portrait of Tam is juxtaposed with an image of Lion Rock on the stamp. In all these

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[190] Lai Chi Kok Amusement Park is an alternative name of Lai Yuen Amusement Park. For more details, see Footnote 191.
"Applauding to Hong Kong Pop Legend: Roman Tam," exhibition pamphlet (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Heritage Museum, 2011).
[191] Ibid.

instances, Tam becomes a protagonist in this Lion Rock narrative, which he—as the original singer of the song "Below the Lion Rock"—took part in its creation and circulation during his lifetime. In other words, Tam was a cultural mediator in asserting Lion Rock as a manifestation of Hong Kong localness during the late 1970s; meanwhile, Lion Rock becomes an active agency in representing and mediating Tam's personhood that persists after his death in postmillennial Hong Kong. The reciprocal relation between Lion Rock and Tam not only reveals the cultural currency and the material impacts of Lion Rock across different spheres, but also its growing influence in characterizing an ideal Hong Kong persona, model, and values (i.e. the process of normalization and the creation of social norms aforementioned that are undertaken by this Lion Rock narrative).

As a case of comparison, Anita Mui, unlike Roman Tam, is not directly linked to any culture reverberation of Lion Rock, but her story of struggle and success, like Tam's, is often rendered into a typical Hong Kong story that transmits the Lion Rock spirit, hence making her life story another Lion Rock narrative. In an event series entitled "The Symbol of Popular Culture: Daughter of Hong Kong Anita Mui" (流行文化是這樣的：香港女兒梅艷芳) organized by the Department of Sociology of the University of Hong Kong and the fan community of Anita Mui "Mui Nation" in 2015, Mui's life is summarized as follows in the event description:

> She [Anita Mui] is a diva on stage, and the best actress on the silver screen; starting with Lai Yuen, and then the Lee Theatre, she got to the Hong Kong Coliseum; from Hong Kong, she moved her stage to Europe, the United States, and Canada—she is a Hong Kong

legend.[192] (my translation)

Similar to Tam's, the dramatic trajectory undertaken by Mui in her life is often highlighted as a common pattern shared by these Lion Rock narratives. Mirroring many stories of hardship in Hong Kong 1960s and 1970s documented in *Below the Lion Rock* program, Mui started her singing career at the age of five in order to support her family. Her success was often mentioned not just with her talents in singing and acting, which were proven by her popularity and recognition (through prizes, awards, and records) in Hong Kong, other places in Asia, and beyond, but with her hard work, her stamina, and even her dedication to community works, local and overseas. With regard to this, Mui is saluted by many friends and co-workers—according to cultural critics Lei Chin-pan—for her lifelong engagement of the "Lion Rock spirit."[193] Meanwhile, Mui's personhood is also shaped by her involvement in public affairs and her outspokenness for social justice—from providing financial aid to help activists flee China after the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, to initiating a fundraising concert for SARS victims and their families during the SARS outbreak in 2003, albeit her terminal illness.[194] In all these instances, Mui's life story is often regarded as a representative case of a Hong Kong story with no disputes.[195] Mui's posthumous title "the daughter of Hong Kong," which was carved on her statue erected on the Star Avenue along the harbour front of Hong Kong, is precisely the kind of convincing remark that illustrates how an ideal Hong Kong persona is moulded by means of Lion Rock and a Hong Kong story that is favoured by the

[192] "Lai Yuen" is the abbreviation of Lai Yuen Amusement Park (where Roman Tam once worked as a gatekeeper). Opened in 1949, the park was once the largest amusement park in Hong Kong, which was a provider of affordable entertainment for all walks of life in the city. The park was closed on March 31, 1997 but remains as an integral part of the collective memory of Hong Kong people. Lee Theatre, built in 1925, is another popular venue for live performance and screenings, until it was demolished to become a shopping mall under the same name in the 1990s. As for the Hong Kong Coliseum, it is an indoor arena that was opened in 1983 and used to be the largest event venue in Hong Kong until 2005. As it is often regarded as the "dream stage" of artists across the generations, the place is deemed as a symbol of success where one's popularity is measured and recognized. The event description was also published in Chinese as follows: 她是歌壇的百變天后，是影壇的百變影后。她從荔園唱到利舞台，再從香港紅館唱到歐洲美加，被視為香港傳奇。
See, "The symbol of popular culture: Anita Mui," Department of Sociology of the University of Hong Kong, http://hkuems1.hku.hk/hkuems/ec_hdetail.aspx?guest=Y&UEID=39590.

[193] Chin-Pan Lei 李展鵬, "Looking for the Daughter of Hong Kong: Hong Kong Culture Represented by Anita Mui," in *Zuihou de manzhu shahua: Mei Yanfang de yanyi rensheng* 最後的蔓珠莎華: 梅艷芳的演藝人生 [The Last Cluster Amaryllis: Anita Mui's Art and Life], ed. Chin-Pan Lei, and Cheuk Naam 卓男 (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 2014), 231-243.

[194] Stokes, 330-1.

[195] See Mui's story portrayed by Lei Chin-Pan.

master narrative is promoted in these Lion Rock narratives.

Cultural critics and writer Lawrence Kwok-ling Pun contends that the oft-mentioned elevation of Mui "from Lai Yuen to Hong Kong Coliseum" is a foundational formula of the Lion Rock Spirit,[196] which is indeed applicable to other Lion Rock narratives in general including the life story of Roman Tam. Regardless of their variation and different degrees of separation to the cultural reverberations of Lion Rock, Tam and Mui were both named "legends below the Lion Rock" (獅子山下的傳奇) by a CD compilation released in 2010. As the two cases have demonstrated, the life stories of Tam and Mui mobilize the Lion Rock narrative to take shape of an 'aspirational' story that portrays how generations of Hong Kong people overcome obstacles to build up today's Hong Kong by upholding the Lion Rock spirit and assuming a 'Hong Kong' identity. When Tam and Mui—especially in their posthumous circulation and reception—continue to be bracketed by the Lion Rock narratives, their personhoods—now solely mediated by representations and their cultural movements—are indeed overtaken by Lion Rock, where their life stories, now rendered into a typical "Hong Kong story," constellates a connection with a Hong Kong's 'local' that is approved by the master narrative. Characterized by the Lion Rock spirit, the 'local'-cum-Hong Kong identity promoted in these Lion Rock narratives engineers and is simultaneously engineered by designated cultural connotations of Lion Rock. At this point, different local relations are hitherto unfolded by Lion Rock as geographical link (a territorial local), as a bottom-up self-positioning of the generation of Hong Kong New Wave (a self-empowering local under British colonialism), and as a carefully constructed story that is based on (neo)liberal modernist values (a prototypical local to promote that can safeguard and propel the current system). In the meantime, different locals that are conceived run in the production and the operation of different worldviews, identities, and Hong Kong stories.

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[196] Lawrence Kwok-ling Pun 潘國靈, "Jiedu Mei Yanfang" 解讀梅艷芳 [Decoding Anita Mui], *Headline Daily* 頭條日報, May 27, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, http://news.stheadline.com/dailynews/headline_news_detail_columnist.asp?id=239483&section_name=wtt&kw=28.
For the cultural connotations of these venues, see Footnote 191.

Lion Rock in Rupture: Enchantment and Disenchantment

With its cultural currency and all these trajectories across different realms, Lion Rock has seemingly taken up traits of an enchanted thing and place. The first level of enchantment comes from the acknowledgement of the agency and the significance of Lion Rock. To cut a long story short, the rock becomes enchanted through its own empowerment, when the modernist paradigm of ordering the world by human-centeredness is destabilized. On the second level, Lion Rock upon its cultural reverberation that began in the 1970s is deemed a subversion to the grand narrative upheld by the British Hong Kong government that overlooks local perspectives, voices, and stories. Enchantment thus refers to the sense of sacredness acquired and amassed by the rock, as it has become something that ordinary people in the urban jungle look up to at times of crisis and difficulty. This understanding of enchantment is inspired by Jane Bennett's book *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (2001), where the experience of enchantment is understood to be "struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday."[197] According to Bennett,

> Such sites of enchantment today include, for example, the discovery of sophisticated modes of communication among nonhumans, the strange agency of physical systems at far-from-equilibrium states, and the animation of objects by video technologies...[198]

In other words, it is by redistributing agency and rebuilding attachment to things and places that enchantment can occur. In the context of Hong Kong, Lion Rock is not only a representative example "amid the familiar and the everyday," but it also places the possibility to be enchanted through the construction of local relations.

Coming to the postmillennial era, the conception and the perception of Lion Rock—having experienced the colonial-postcolonial transition of the city in 1997—become more diverse, where some of these representations and interpretations are found to be incompatible and contradictory to one another. As a result, the localness first embodied by Lion Rock in the 1970s is subject to question in terms of its

[197] Jane Bennett, *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.
[198] Ibid.

accuracy and representativeness in the postmillennial era. The rupture, gradually surfaced, precisely marks a turning point between enchantment and disenchantment. The plural form "localnesses" is thereby invoked to cope with the changes and sometimes uneasiness faced by Lion Rock at this crossroads.

After Leslie Cheung and Anita Mui passed away in 2003, their monumental significance to Hong Kong culture was recognized at the same time, as they were posthumously awarded the lifelong achievement award in the 2004 Hong Kong Film Awards, and in the 2004 Taiwan Golden Horse Award together; however, ten years after, in 2013, Lawrence Pun observes the persistence of a "commemorative fever" of Leslie Cheung among the keen supporters of Cheung in propagating the aura and the legend of their idol, whereas the supporters of Anita Mui are more reserved when compared to Cheung's. With regard to this, Pun attributes the banality of the Lion Rock narrative to the cause of the homogenization of Mui's life story, which in the end flattens the diversity of her images, stories, and cultural legacy. This henceforth opens up a wider scope to examine the transformation of Lion Rock in the postmillennial era, where disenchantment not only casts impacts on Lion Rock and its representations, but also on what Lion Rock represents.

In retrospect, the aura of Lion Rock began to deplete after it was repeatedly borrowed by the Hong Kong SAR government to gear the implementation of government policies in the post-1997 era. The government's recontextualization of the Lion Rock spirit during the financially difficult year of 2002 at first reflected the strategic adaptation of a locally generated cultural symbol during the colonial era to facilitate the so-called 'post'-colonial development of the city. Later in the same year, Zhu Rongji, the former premier of the People's Republic of China, also borrowed the Lion Rock spirit in his speech during his visit in Hong Kong, with a wish to comfort the discontented Hong Kong people who had then recognized the governance crisis of the post-1997 government. Since then, the emblematic song "Below the Lion Rock" is frequently heard in official events including the Hong Kong SAR 10th Anniversary Gala in 2007, and the 5th East-Asian Games in 2009. In a government-initiated community-building campaign "Hong Kong: Our Home" inaugurated in 2013, the campaign theme song entitled "Sail On" 同舟之情 is inspired by nothing else but Roman Tam's "Below the Lion Rock." On the level of production, the new song is

also crafted by borrowing the 'aura' of the original song and the star effect from Hong Kong popular culture. Marketed as a way to pay homage to Tam, "Sail On" is performed by Jacky Cheung (1961-) and Eason Chan (1974-), two highly acclaimed singers and equally popular stars across two generations of Hong Kong people (after Tam's era). On the level of reception, not only that the title "Sail On" reminds the audience of the boat-sharing imagery that is imprinted in the original song and has become popularized by the Lion Rock narratives, part of the melody and the lyrics of "Below the Lion Rock" are also incorporated into the new song, with an aim to promote solidarity, togetherness, and a common identity derived from Lion Rock in the community.[199]

Conspicuous in all these gestures is, in fact, the government's attempt to shape a post-1997 master narrative by a use of Lion Rock that aims to hide social differences and problems in name of harmony. Echoing to the earlier critiques against the (neo)liberal modernist framework in homogenizing Hong Kong story, the rosy picture of stability and prosperity painted by the myth of Lion Rock, likewise, runs the risk of naturalizing social problems and social injustice by normalizing them as hardships and obstacles that would eventually be overcome and lead to one's success as long as one persists. Although the new episodes that are added to the *Below the Lion Rock* series after the 2000s do focus on the everyday life stories of ordinary people and speak of the difficulties shared by urban dwellers in Hong Kong, they are still incapable of overriding the Lion Rock miracle that is often promoted by the Establishment. Intriguingly, the deflation of Lion Rock is even hinted in the lyrics of "Sail On." To start with, the new lyrics propagate with the generic images of being "in the same boat" (同舟), and "holding hands when the going gets rough" (攜手走過崎嶇) on the one hand;[200] on the other hand, new images are drawn to describe problems faced at the present moment. For instance, the line "everyone feels lost sometimes" (誰也經歷過迷惘) appears for four times even when the rest of the

[199] "Pop icons sing from the heart for 'Hong Kong: Our Home' Campaign," Hong Kong SAR Government, April 30, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201304/30/P201304300395.htm

[200] The English lyrics are officially provided by the campaign organizer. See,
"The lyrics of 'Sail On'"《同舟之情》歌詞, Hong Kong: Our Home Campaign「家是香港」運動,
http://www.hkourhome.gov.hk/chi/song.shtml [Chinese version];
http://www.hkourhome.gov.hk/eng/song.shtml [English version].

chorus change.[201] Apart from the emphasis on the general condition of being lost, the most explicit description of an actual problem is mentioned soon after the song starts: "[f]amilies have their ups and downs, but that doesn't mean we're foes" (一家親親到有時矛盾/ 不必以敵人自居).[202] To recontextualize this line under the wider socio-political landscape of post-1997 Hong Kong, the portrayal of a "family" in crisis correlates with the local population's accumulated frustration towards the Hong Kong government, the establishment and the political regime of China in general, while the friendly advice to not see each other as enemies reminds one of what the latter tries to persuade the former to accept. Despite its apparent (or intentional) cheesiness, the lyrics can be read as both optimistic (the purpose of the campaign 'commissioned' by the government) and pessimistic (when one reads against the grain) at once. For instance, the same line "[t]here is a world where we can go,/ where life shines bright" (還有天地能前往/ 還有生命發光)[203] is repeated three times in the chorus, before it is changed into the new line "[t]here is still hope to lead us on,/ still those with kind intent" (還有希望能前往/ 還有親善眼光)[204] towards the end of the song. Moreover, both lines in Chinese follow a similar structure by repeating the sentence pattern of "haiyou... haiyou..." (還有...還有...), which can be literally translated as "there is still... there is still..." in English. Absent from the official English version of the song, the pattern creates an unstable pendulum swinging between the straightforward, literal meaning of the expression and the wordplay of negation concerning what is not there anymore (i.e. what has been dis-appeared upon the colonial-postcolonial transition in Hong Kong and beyond). After all, the lyricist Abrahim Wing-him Chan, as a prolific, emerging writer who, with a sharp pen in his hand, steers well with a wide range of subject matters, is surely capable of playing with this ambiguity between the master narrative and its opposition.

With an eye to this (intended?) banality, neither the song "Sail On" nor the campaign stirred up resonance in the society. Meanwhile, the currency of Lion Rock itself was also facing a dead end, in contrast to the previous popularity enjoyed by the rock as it geared the formation of Hong Kong local culture and identity from the

[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.

below in the 1970s. From Lion Rock's opposite stance to the colonial government in the 1970s to the SAR government's repeated use of Lion Rock to promote an officially approved identity in post-1997 Hong Kong, this changing point is undoubtedly a direct cause of the declining popularity and the subsequent disenchantment of Lion Rock in postmillennial Hong Kong. To make matters worse, three years after the Manila Bus Hostage Crisis had tragically ended with the death of eight Hong Kong tourists and several injured—Secretary for Security Lai Tung Kwok praised the survivors, and the grieving relatives of the victims for carrying out the Lion Rock Spirit in coping with their difficulties and fighting for justice, despite the fact that by 2013 compensation and formal apology had not yet been settled and negotiations between the Hong Kong and the Philippine government had hit the rocks.[205] As it is clearly shown in all these examples delineated earlier, the SAR government's abuse of Lion Rock actually lies in its application of Lion Rock and the Lion Rock spirit in covering up conflicts, problems, and discontentment in the society and replacing them with a simple call for unity and solidarity.

In this regard, Lion Rock too has become a cliché. Due to its wide-spreading currency, it has obtained enough influence to become part of the grand narrative that came to overshadow other *petites histoires*—this new positioning of Lion Rock is contrasted to what the rock had achieved in the 1970s and the 1980s by subverting the mainstream narrative of the authority. In other words, Lion Rock is assuming a position in postmillennial Hong Kong that is used to be detested. By the same logic, the sentiments and connotations channelled out through this banal image of Lion Rock is very likely to be questioned. In addition to this, the keen connection between Lion Rock and the local is also overturned.

[205] "Renzhi shijian lili zaimu, Li Dongguo: jiashu fahui Shizishan jingshen" 人質事件歷歷在目 黎棟國：家屬發揮獅子山精神 [Manila Hostage Crisis: Lai Tung-kwok praised families for upholding Lion Rock Spirit], *AM730,* October 28, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016. http://www.am730.com.hk/article-178574.

Fig. 4.2 Film still from Wong Ping's "Under the Lion Crotch" (2012)

Wong Ping's animated short film "Under the Lion Crotch" (獅子胯下) (2012) condenses all these critiques towards the government and Lion Rock into visual images. Originally released as a music video for a song under the same title performed by an independent musical group *No One Remains Virgin* in Cantonese, the short film won the Gold Award in the animation category of 18th Incubator for Film and Visual media in Asia (ifva) Competition in Hong Kong in 2013 and was screened in more than 15 film festivals around the world. The animation portrays a dystopian Hong Kong on the way to annihilation, where images depicting graphic violence (explosions, the dismantling of body parts, and the splashing of blood) and sexual organs (the penis of the Lion, and the vagina of a female cyborg) dominate the video to suggest a sense of excess, decadence, and extreme. Despite the deliberate rawness of the images and the simplicity of the story, the short film, together with the lyrics, is loaded with cultural symbols and social critiques. Local icons such as Lion Rock and the clock tower of the Central Star Ferry Pier can be recognized without difficulty but with a twist. Apart from that, Hong Kong is identified as a small patch of land surrounded by the sea, there is none but surprisingly just one piece of human architecture (the clock tower) on the island. To make it even more bizarre, the close-up of the clock tower (with its fast-moving clock hands) in the opening sequence of the music video suggests a spectral reappearance of the Central Star Ferry Pier which

had been demolished in Hong Kong in 2006 amidst fierce protests.[206] Lion Rock, instead of being a stationary mountain in the natural landscape, becomes a faceless cyborg lion that is controlled by two entrepreneur-like figures from the inside: weapons are fired from the lion's penis to destroy the remaining livelihood on the island. Following the hysterical screams of the onscreen figures (which are eerily not heard in the soundtrack), the lyrics denounce the immoral entrepreneurs and the equally immoral authority that indulges injustice and inequality to take place:

> Our land is brutally torn apart by conglomerates
> Redevelopment swept across the city
> Their thriving business had left us homeless
> Rotten city, rotten crowd
> Luxury clothing won't conceal the stench[207]

With the visual bombardment of the frantic images onscreen, "Under the Lion Crotch" dismantles the Lion Rock narrative—the symbol of Lion Rock, hijacked by the authority, is criticized as a tool that erases differences and exploitation, while the Lion Rock spirit is detested as an illusion of solidarity that is used by the authority to promote the myth of progress and stability. This reflexive criticism towards social norms and the refusal to be identified with the now-cliché Lion Rock spirit are at best summarized in the self-introduction of the short film:

> Live the spirit of 'Under the Lion Rock,'
> Fulfil the wishes of the spirit under the lion's crotch.[208]

Not only that the brilliant wordplay of the term "spirit" in the English version offer the flexibility to interchange the "spirit" as *jingshen* 精神 (attitude) with the "spirit"

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[206] In addition to this, the same pier occupies another important position in the history of protests in Hong Kong. The protest against Star Ferry fare increase broke off in 1966 where social concern and discontent with the government were expressed in form of public opinion. Often described as "an unprecedented moments" in the history of Hong Kong by scholars and the media, So Sau-ching started his one-man hunger strike exactly in this pier. See,
Gary Ka-wai Cheung, *Hong Kong's Watershed: The 1967 Riot*s (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 10.

[207] The English translation of the lyrics is provided by the band. The original lyrics in Chinese are: 我家任由四手亂偷/ 四周酷刑收購/ 劫匪豐收我卻無力自救/ 這家已爛透/戴金穿銀難敵惡臭。
Ping Wong, and No One Remains Virgin, "Under the Lion Crotch," Vimeo, https://vimeo.com/33518886.

[208] The original line is: 活出獅子山下精神, 成就獅子胯下亡魂。
"Past winners of ifva Awards," ifva, http://www.ifva.com/?p=5358&lang=en [English version]; http://www.ifva.com/?p=5358 [Chinese version].

as *wanghun* 亡魂 (spectre) in the Chinese version;[209] it also warns the consequences of dismissing other voices in telling Hong Kong stories (by following the neoliberal-modernist-based Lion Rock story unreflectively) and alternative paths for the future development of Hong Kong society (by following the sole pursuit of consumerism and capitalist materialism).[210]

As there is this a growing voice in the local population that refuses to take part in the Lion Rock narrative propagated by the authority in the post-1997 era, the cultural significances as well the spiritual attachment of the rock become largely depleted, and hence disenchantment is underway. Coming to this point, although Lion Rock stands in the physical environment as it always does, the growing local subjectivity that emerges in postcolonial Hong Kong indeed rejects Lion Rock as a manifestation of the form of localness that is promoted and backed by the establishment. In other words, the disenchantment of Lion Rock is caused by the disagreement with a Hong Kong localness designed and assigned by the authority—and this becomes even more prominent during the Umbrella Movement in 2014, when the government and the pro-Establishment camp used the well-circulated Lion Rock

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[209] Ibid.

[210] Preservation campaigns, social activism, and political awareness are deemed by many scholars as the rise of a postmillennial Hong Kong local consciousness. Law Wing-sang particularly observes this as the "third wave of local consciousness." While the social context against which the *Below the Lion Rock* series was produced is, according to Law, the first wave, he traces the preliminary formation of the third wave to the year 2003—when the Hong Kong SAR government attempted to pass the anti-subservience law (commonly known as "Article 23") and was resisted by huge opposition from the local population (which includes the oft-mentioned 2003 July 1st March where some 500,000 citizens took to the street). The third wave was further expanded in the campaigns calling for the preservation of heritage (Central Star Ferry Pier and Queen's Pier), and neighbourhood and community as a whole (Lee Tung Street and Choi Yuen Village). The local relations that are rebuilt and reinforced in the third wave emphasize on the bottom-up participation in plans made for the city. In this regard, the local relations that are newly established in postmillennial Hong Kong pertain a goal to rekindle and make sense of collective memory, personal attachment, and community concerns, among others. Ip Iam-chong refers this as a whole to the "self-reflexive local discourse." To distinguish these advocators of the local from their more radical counterparts that emerge later in face of Hong Kong-China conflicts, Chen Yun-chung calls this group the "open localists" while Lawrence Pun calls them the "mild localists."
See,
Iam-chong Ip 葉蔭聰, "Xianggang xin bentu lunshu de ziwo pipan yishi," 香港新本土論述的自我批判意識 [The Self-critical Awareness in New Hong Kong Local Discourses], *Reflexion* 19 思想 (2011): 113, 115.
Lawrence Kwok-ling Pun, "Ten-year Transformation of 'Local'."
Yun-chung Chen 陳允中, "Kaifang pai yu tuzhu pai de bentu xiangxiang" 開放派與土著派的本土想像 [The Local Imaginaries of Open Localist and Nativist], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, May 29, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20130529/18275711.
Wing-sang Law, "The Present and the Past of Hong Kong Local Consciousness," 137.

narrative to condemn the civil disobedience campaign and the supporters of genuine universal suffrage for destroying Hong Kong's prosperity and stability that is built up by the Lion Rock spirit of the past generations.

The Rise of Local Consciousness and the Reenchantment of Lion Rock

The Umbrella Movement, which took place from September 27 to roughly December 15 in 2014, is a civil disobedience campaign in Hong Kong demanding democracy, equal political rights, and participation, in response to the decision made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) in China that ruled out fair political representation in future Chief Executive Elections in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong government's proposed political reform programme that insisted on the inclusion of Beijing's decision. The idea of launching a non-violence civil disobedience campaign was first proposed by Law professor Benny Tai Yiu-Ting and then supported by Reverend Chu Yiu-ming and professor of sociology Chan Kin-man as early as in 2013 under the name of "Occupy Central with Love and Peace." The campaign, originally planned to take place on October 1, 2014, the national day of the People's Republic of China, stirred up a mixed response among the public. However, things started to change after the Beijing authority imposed the abovementioned decision on August 31, 2014, which shocked many in Hong Kong. Students' groups including the Hong Kong Federation of Students and Scholarism initiated a class boycott campaign among university students, college students, and secondary school students starting from September 22, 2014. During the following days, non-violence sits-in and rallies took place near the government's headquarters, the Legislative Council Complex, and the Government House. Without any answer or response from the government, students in the evening of September 26 tried to enter the Civil Square, which was supposed to be an open area for demonstration but access was ironically banned from the public since two months earlier.[211] The action was faced by the violent riot control of the Hong Kong police, which caused more people to

[211] "Popular protest spot Civic Square closed for security works, public access limited," *South China Morning Post*, July 17, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, "http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1555573/popular-protest-spot-civic-square-closed-security-works-public-access.

gather in support of the students. The long-discussed civil disobedience campaign "Occupy Central with Love and Peace" was launched overnight, while the public as well as the organizers were still unsure about its feasibility. In the morning of September 28, the police force used teargas, pepper-spray, and batons in an attempt to disperse the gathering crowd. Umbrellas, which were originally planned for a protection against pepper spray, became shields against the eighty-seven canisters of teargas fired by the police.[212] Appalled by the reaction of the police and the government, many more people—bringing their umbrellas with them—joined in and took to the streets, while others started to camp on the streets, resulting in the formation of three occupy sites in Admiralty (instead of Central as planned), Causeway Bay, and Mongkok. Umbrella is consequently turned into the name of the movement, and also a symbol of the movement that is used in everyday life and in representations.

Approximately 26 days after the Umbrella Movement had begun, a 10-storey long banner with the demand "I want genuine universal suffrage" (我要真普選) was hanged on Lion Rock on October 23, 2014. This is an important turning point on at least two levels: first, the morale of the occupiers and the supporters of the movement was raised; second, a reenchantment of Lion Rock came to light with the emergence of this Umbrella community.

[212] Despite this, the keen opposers of the movement (primarily the Pro-Beijing politicians and groups) made countless attempts to disengage the enchantment of the umbrella among the supporters of the movement. Similar to what the discussion of Hong Kong's local encounters, the previously neutral symbol of umbrella is devalued and even demonized. For instance,
"'Umbrellas more aggressive weapons than useless tear gas,' claims pro-Beijing lawmaker," *South China Morning Post*, October 16, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1617690/hong-kong-lawmaker-says-umbrellas-are-more-dangerous-tear-gas?page=all.

Fig. 4.3 Lion Rock and the banner "I want genuine universal suffrage"

The banner on Lion Rock marks a milestone in the fabrication of another Hong Kong identity and community in the post-1997 era among those who refer themselves to "the awakened generation" in an "epoch of resistance."[213] Through its visual impact, the banner, which turned out to be highly visible from the areas located "below the Lion Rock," managed to cheer up many occupiers and supporters of the movement who were frustrated by the non-responses of the government regarding their requests.[214] In an open letter written in vernacular Cantonese, this group of climbers who called themselves "Hong Kong Spidie" encouraged Hong Kong people to reclaim their own Lion Rock and to continue the fight for democracy and genuine

[213] In a rally that took place immediately after Beijing's decision on 31 August 2014, Benny Tai said in face of social injustice and the unwillingness of the Hong Kong government to hear the voice of its people, "Hong Kong has entered an epoch of resistance."
"Dai Yaoting shengyan jinru 'kangming shidai'" 戴耀廷聲言進入「抗命時代」[Benny Tai: Entering the Epoch of Resistance], *Singtao Daily* 星島日報, September 1, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://std.stheadline.com/daily/news-content.php?id=190962&target=2.
Kin-Man Chan 陳健民, "Kangming shidai di kaishi" 抗命時代的開始 [The Dawn of the Epoch of Resistance], *Mingpao Daily* 明報, September 8, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://oclp.hk/index.php?route=occupy/article_detail&article_id=195.
[214] "Hong Kong spidie," a group made up of nine climbers, uploaded a video on Youtube showing how the banner was hanged on Lion Rock, which is also a manifestation of the "Lion Rock Spirit" itself. In the soundtrack of the video, the song "Boundless Ocean Vast Skies" (海闊天空) released in 1993 by the local Canto-Rock band *Beyond* was heard—it is another emblematic song frequently sung by occupiers and supporters during the Umbrella Movement symbolizing the pursuit of freedom, and the faith in hope and dream.
"Up on the Lion Rock: Behind the Scene," *Youtube*, October 23, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iEQ2rj-7DDE.

universal suffrage:

> The people fighting for real universal suffrage all over Hong Kong have shown great perseverance. This kind of fighting against injustice, strength in the face of troubles, is the true Lion Rock spirit. [...] The government can take away our banner up on the Lion Rock, but we can hang our own banner at home, at school, or put it on T-shirts, bags or even your forehead. [...] Anywhere that we can hang up a banner of "We want true universal suffrage" is our "Lion Rock."[215]

In response to how fast the government reacted when it came to removing the banner (which was within several hours after the spotting of the banner), many other similar banners in different size were hanged in different areas of the city. This is, on the one hand, to answer the calling of Hong Kong Spidie; on the other hand, creative works in support of the Umbrella Movement began to include the image of Lion Rock with its newly acquired association to the civil disobedience campaign for democracy. These highly conscious acts of recontextualizing Lion Rock in different spaces and places other than its original location not only liberate the Lion Rock spirit from its previous operational logic that has become disenchanted to many in postmillennial Hong Kong; but also continue the life of the removed banner on Lion Rock by means of representation and the circulation of these representations. The currency regained by Lion Rock from below also shows the explosion of emotional attachment towards the rock, which is left dormant in its disenchanted mode. These renewed and re-accepted

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[215] The original text in Chinese is: 我地大家一齊重新演譯了獅子山精神[...]政府可以拆獅子山上既Banner，但係大家屋企窗台、晾衫架、小店櫥窗、課室壁報、T恤、帳篷、背囊，甚至自己個額頭，都可以掛起「我要真普選」五隻大字[...]任何可以掛起「我要真普選」的地方，都係我地心中的獅子山。
The English translation of the statement is provided by the following news articles:
Cliff Lo, Peter So, and Emily Tsang, "Pro-democracy banner hung from Lion Rock has officials scrambling," *South China Morning Post*, October 23, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1622971/climbers-hang-giant-banner-lion-rock-calling-real-universal-suffrage.
Cliff Lo, "Giant pro-democracy banner removed from Hong Kong's famous Lion Rock," *South China Morning Post*, October 24, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1623853/giant-pro-democracy-banner-removed-hong-kongs-famous-lion-rock.

cultural connotations of Lion Rock within the Umbrella community consequently have lifted the rock up from being a deflated icon to an indispensable emblematic symbol of the Umbrella Movement. Through the massive re-representation of Lion Rock in creative works and related narratives, Lion Rock is now translated as an unbeatable spirit of Hong Kong people in fighting for democracy in the context of the Umbrella Movement, hence leaving behind its connection to the official narrative in the hands of the authority. In these new relations formed between Lion Rock and the Umbrella community, Lion Rock is reworked into a new cultural object that celebrates differences but also freedom and democracy amidst hardship, hence soliciting a Hong Kong localness that is recognized and embraced by members in this newly formed community.

As what is considered to be a reenchantment can be disenchantment for some others, and vice versa, Hong Kong's predicament in the postmillennial era is convincingly shown in the different outlooks brought about by Lion Rock. Albeit Lion Rock's renewed popularity in the umbrella community, Lion Rock is simultaneously adapted by the Hong Kong SAR government, the pro-Establishment camp, and pro-Beijing bodies in speeches and slogans that reprimand the civil disobedience campaign. As a Hong Kong Deputy of The 12th National People's Congress of PRC and the Permanent Honorary President of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong, David Yau-kar Wong, also holding many other positions in various governmental boards and private organizations, insisted in a radio programme diffused by RTHK on October 25, 2014 that "many people" still uphold "the Lion Rock spirit from before [the pro-democracy banner was hanged]."[216] Embedded in Wong's statement is an adherence to the conventional Lion Rock narrative, where *the* "Hong Kong" story is rigidly understood as one about growth, progress, and economic miracle (see Chapter 1), where no other alternative is allowed. Following the (neo)liberal modernist logic that underlines this Hong Kong story in the master narrative, the occupy movement is disavowed not only because of its disrespect for law, but even more so due to its disregard of the framework of progress and development that is embodied by the so-called Lion Rock spirit

[216] *Saturday Accountability* 星期六問責, Radio and Television Hong Kong, October 25, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://app3.rthk.hk/special/pau/article.php?aid=662.

interpreted along this line. With an eye to what has been traced in earlier parts of this chapter concerning the different cultural reverberations of Lion Rock since the 1970s, the refusal to acknowledge the "new Lion Rock spirit" through the insistence of the "old" Lion Rock spirit is problematic, since the intent to legitimize the so-called 'old' as something authentic can easily be rebuked by the early popularity of the Lion Rock in the 1970s that is rooted in the will to subvert the master narrative at the time.

As the clashes and conflicts between the contrary readerships of Lion Rock become increasingly obvious, Lion Rock is now a tug of war between different forces that back different understandings of "Hong Kong" and "local," if they are allowed to emerge under the parameter of PRC as a nation. To illustrate this, one can look at a concert held on May 19, 2015, in honour of the 82 year-old musician Joseph Koo, the composer of the song "Below the Lion Rock," upon his retirement. During the concert, the landmark song "Below the Lion Rock" was of course performed, with singer and actress Liza Wang 汪明荃 (1947-), also a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in China, recounting the impact of the song and the significance of Lion Rock to Hong Kong society. An embarrassing moment, however, arose when Wang suddenly condemned in her speech the "acts that damage the stability and the prosperity of Hong Kong built up by the past few generations." Her implication on the Umbrella Movement became explicit when she chanted the government's slogan "2017 make it happen" on stage. This didactical speech that, according to Wang, is a message to "young people." At last, she encouraged the spectators to show their support to the government's political reform plan, which is the one opposed by the supporters of "genuine universal suffrage" during the Umbrella Movement. In return, Wang was booed by the spectators and the slogan "I want genuine universal suffrage" was heard and echoed in the hall.[217] Revealed in these mixed voices are the different usages and connotations of Lion Rock on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the different constellations of Hong Kong and Hong Kong's local when agencies like things, places, and bodies are aligned differently.

[217] "Jiao '2017 yiding yao de' beixu, Wang Mingquan zhaochang 'Yonggan de Zhongguoren" 叫「2017一定要得」被噓 汪明荃照唱《勇敢的中國人》[Booed by spectators, Lisa Wang chants '2017 Make it Happen' and sings *Brave Chinese*], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, May 20, 2015, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/enews/realtime /20150520/53756725.

Re-energizing Lion Rock and Lion Rock Spirits

Amidst contacts and conflicts, the cultural reverberation of Lion Rock does not stop here, as the pre-existing meanings and relations between different constellations of Lion Rock are continually remediated and reinterpreted by different emotional responses and cultural connotations across time and through space. Despite the failure to communicate even, or precisely, by sharing Lion Rock as a common cultural symbol that is illustrated in the above, the notion of the "New Lion Rock spirit," raised in a commercial of Fortune Pharmacal Company, is an attempt to breathe new air and plurality into *Lion Rocks* and the *Lion Rock spirits*.[218]

Aired in March 2015, the commercial portrays a number of Hong Kong personae who represent different generations, different values, and hence different ways of perceiving Lion Rock and the Lion Rock spirit. Among them, known figures include the 91-year-old Ip Chun, who is an adept Wing Chun master himself and also the son of the well-known Wing Chun "grandmaster" Ip Man; Chan Chuk-ming, a restaurant owner in his 60s nicknamed "Shum Shui Po Brother Ming (Ming Gor)" who has been giving free meals to the needy and providing affordable low-cost meals for the poor in the Sham Shui Po area for years; illustrator Jasmine Tse in her late 20s who publishes under the name of "Tse Sai Pei the Incapable" and likes to reflect social happenings and phenomena by the use of humour and satire; "Brother Tat (Tat Gor)" Lam Wai-wah, a post-80s gamer who has become the vice-president of a mobile application company; and Steven Lam, another post-80s entrepreneur who founded GoGoVan, widely considered to be one of the most successful start-up business in Hong Kong over the recent years, and is also a supporter of other local business and affairs. Appearing in-between these recognisable figures are an old man picking up scrap papers who is called Uncle Ho, an accountant checking property prices who is called Wong Chi-poon, and a secondary school student who is called Ho Ngai-chi and is the only one with a voice among the three of them. Bracketing all these figures are six anonymous, young people seen in the beginning and the ending of the commercial. Their two appearances are distinguished by the different backgrounds they are situated in: a long shot at a vast space between the sea and the

[218] A photo exhibition with Lion Rock as the subject was, for instance, organized to further explore the New Lion Rock spirit.

land is contrasted by a compact frame where they are crowded in the concourse of a MTR station at the end of the commercial.

Fig. 4.4 Still from the commercial "New Lion Rock Spirit": Young people

According to Fortune Pharmacal Company and the production company of this award-winning commercial, the project aims to show how the Lion Rock spirit and the city are shared by different walks of life, albeit their intrinsic differences and the social cleavage found within Hong Kong society.[219] Perseverance, as a oft-mentioned characteristic of the Lion Rock spirit, is demonstrated by Ip Chun in his life-long dedication to the practice and the teaching of Wing Chun; and by Chan Chuk-ming for continuously carrying out his self-initiated community work. Nonetheless, the conventional emphasis of progress and economic development is questioned by illustrator "Tse Sei Pei the Incapable" and gamer Brother Tat. Against the backdrop of a public housing estate, Tse asks, "is life only about making money and making money?" which is followed by her confirmative answer, "I don't buy the idea"—as if the answer has already been implied in her pseudonym. The celebration of "incapability" can then be read as a sarcastic comment and a subversion to the importance of capability and efficiency embedded in the (neo)liberal modernist framework. Meanwhile, the ideology of advancement through hardship and success through the accumulation of experience is also rejected by Brother Tat, as he puts to challenge: "who says gamers are losers?"[220] To this end, *the* "Lion Rock spirit" is

[219] "Yusan yundong qifa, Xingfu Yiyao chudong Shizishan jingshen" 雨傘運動啟發, 幸福醫藥觸動獅子山精神 [Inspired by Umbrella Movement, Fortune Pharmacal provokes Lion Rock Spirit], *Next Magazine* 壹週刊, November 14, 2015, accessed July 21, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/nextmag/art/20151114/19370205.

[220] In addition to the television-run commercial, five individual short films that portray the five figures

actually broken down into different pieces to give way to different *Lion Rock spirits* that can be assembled, applied, and practiced according to one's wish, without the need to homogenize, or be engulfed by one another.

Fig. 4.5 Still from the commercial "New Lion Rock Spirit": "Is life only about making money and making money?"

In addition to the different perspectives of different personae, places, and things that make their appearance in the commercial, there is also open room for interpretation. For instance, the eye-catching words "University of Hong Kong" seen on the wall of the MTR station can varyingly be a reference of youth, a symbol of institution, or, on the contrary, a reminder of Hong Kong's history of social activism and resistance.[221] This again demonstrates how different constellations of things, places, and bodies are capable of generating different meanings (in this case, the different interpretations of the Lion Rock Spirit). At last, Lion Rock itself in the natural environment is also given a new look. At the end of the commercial, a figure

in details, namely Ip Chun, Chan Chuk-ming, Tse Sei Pei, Brother Tat, and Steve Lam, are separately uploaded by the Fortune Pharmacal Company on Youtube.

[221] University students and student unions are known to have played and are still playing an important role in standing up against social injustice, in organizing social movements, and in fighting for equality, freedom, and democracy in Hong Kong. Some examples include the Star Ferry Incident in 1966, the reaction to Beijing Tiananmen Square Massacre in China in 1989, and students' involvement in the Umbrella Movement in 2014. Revolutionist Sun Yat-sen is also one of the notable alumni of the University of Hong Kong.

can be seen—under the camera's long shot—walking in a misty mountain where the voice-over says "living in Hong Kong has never been easy"; this is followed by a sequence of fast-cutting montage showcasing the static shots of each Hong Kong personae that have been presented in the commercial, and the voice-over contemplates, "each generation has their own Lion Rock Spirit." In the ending scene, Lion Rock is seen from afar immersed in a sea of clouds—unlike the cliché, frontal portrayal of Lion Rock, this alternative perspective induces an unconventional way of looking at Lion Rock. This new encounter with Lion Rock thereby encourages a new decipherment to take place. In contrast to the black-and-white tone that persists throughout the commercial, the ending sequence displays traces of coloured rays shining from the sky onto the rock. The light reflected through the cloud/fog in the sky suggests an ambiguity between dusk and dawn—this precisely reminds one of the potentiality of multiple ways of reading and seeing, where agencies in different configurations can yield to totally different meanings. Rather than imposing a new hierarchy, the newness suggested by the commercial lies on the plural ways of seeing; and this is indeed a potential answer to the popularity of the commercial where an unexpected connection—whether it is acknowledged or not—is formed among different interlocutors of Lion Rock. To this end, Lion Rock, readily as a source, a mediator, as well as diffuser of a physical localness, gives light to the importance of examining local relations. Meanwhile, the localnesses manifested on Lion Rock should be understood as different constellations of the rock, Hong Kong, and its people.

Having restored and having been reciprocally enhanced by the spirituality of the rock, the sublime picture brings back the (re)enchanting quality of Lion Rock which is not only built on the agency of the rock, but also its regenerative characteristics in soliciting different human-nonhuman liaisons in the process of signification and remediation. In a parallel example, released more or less at the same time as this commercial is a song titled "Cantopop" 廣東歌 that is performed and written by the all-rounded artist-singer-lyricist Jan Lamb. The song, as its name has already suggested, pays homage to the Cantopop culture of Hong Kong, which is considered to be declining over the years. While Lion Rock finds its appearance in this particular song by Lamb who is known for his humour and wittiness, and is no

less an icon of Hong Kong (popular) culture, this is also implied that Lion Rock has shrugged off its disenchanted image and negative connotations—as Lamb inaugurates the song by the line: [as an] inspirational song/ Lion Rock motivates me" (勵志歌/ 獅子山鼓舞我). To this end, Lion Rock through Lamb's rendition has seemingly been restored to what it used to maintain before its deflation took place; meanwhile, "Cantopop," like "Sail On," also incorporates an older song into the arrangement of its music and part of the lyrics. First performed by Jenny Tsang in 1978, this song named "Conflict" 奮鬥 is written and composed respectively by the co-creators of "Below the Lion Rock" James Wong and Joseph Koo for a TVB drama under the same title. What is noteworthy in Lamb's song is the reluctance to be nostalgic and oversentimental when paying tribute to the past. In other words, the 'new' song refuses to stay in the past, although it signifies the golden age of Cantopop. Instead, the song reaches out to form relations with present Hong Kong by, for instance, incorporating the image of "Queensway" 金鐘道 (a reference to an occupy zone in Umbrella Movement), and mentioning the trend of "parody song" 惡搞歌 (which is a popular form of derivative work among netizens over the years) in a highly self-reflexive manner. To this end, Lamb's song differs from its senior counterparts such as "Below the Lion Rock" and "Conflict," by steering away from their underlying 'moral message' that is built on the urge to progress through urban development and economy-driven modernization. By presenting an alternative, Lamb, according to the lyrics, does not mind staying hungry a little bit, as long as he can sing a Cantonese song whenever he wants (就算會有一點肚餓 /唱首廣東歌代表我).

Fig. 4.6 Ending scene of the commercial "New Lion Rock Spirit": Lion Rock from a different angle

Conclusion:

From Rock-spotting to World-making

All as rocks, a "barren rock" to the colonizers, Sung Wong Toi to the Chinese literati in Hong Kong, and Lion Rock to different generations of Hong Kong people disclose different world-making processes where different worlds-in-motion are generated by different constellations of things, places, and bodies. To this end, myth-making, place-making, and at last world-making are closely connected to one another. "Myth is a kind of speech," proclaims Roland Barthes in his seminal book *Mythologies*.[222] In the book, Barthes uncovers myth from a critical perspective, with an aim to unsettle pre-existing "naturalness" and regularity that are embedded in common sense and ideology and that circumscribe day-to-day situations and social phenomena. Especially in the long essay "Myth Today," myth is understood and applied by Barthes as "a second-order semiological system" where the "materials of mythical speech" are signs produced in the first order that have become signifiers in the second order, and it is in the second order where myth operates.[223] As second-order signifiers, these materials need not be the acoustic images in Saussure's model, but are named by Barthes as "the language itself, photography, painting, posters, rituals, objects,

[222] Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1972), 107.
[223] Ibid., 113.

etc."[224] To delineate myth as a composite mode of signification, Barthes breaks down the composite system into the primary "linguistic" system that sets up a fundamental language for the secondary system to be established. In respect of their interconnected relations, the first system is what Barthes refers to as the "language-object" while the second system where myth is involved is called "metalanguage."[225] All in all, myth is a mode of signification that is made up of a sum of signs.

With reference to Barthes, the two rocks I revisited in these two chapters, their connotation and representation, as well as their endless remediation and recontextualization are indeed encircled by different systems of myth that generate different signs, and ultimately different worlds. Take Lion Rock as an example: at first, the emergence of Lion Rock in the 1970s defies the intention of the authority and is deemed as tactics adopted by local creative talents with rising local consciousness to tell trivial, hidden stories of ordinary people from below, with an aim to resist against what was forcefully made mainstream by the official, government-approved master narrative of the city. During these processes of representation and interpretation, Lion Rock, originally as a hill made up of rocks in the natural landscape, acquires magnitude as a recognisable place that emits spirituality in the urban city. To this end, Lion Rock, which exists physically in nature and propagates partially as myths in culture, nonetheless brings materiality to myth and agency to the nonhuman components in its operation and propagation. It is in this context that Lion Rock, infused with collective memories, individual experiences, and personal sentiments shared by those who too had struggled for a living amidst difficulties, exposes its nonhuman agency by becoming an enchanted object in the modern world and simultaneously enchanting Hong Kong people through the myth of the Lion Rock spirit. This modern enchantment of Lion Rock is later on transformed into disenchantment and reenchantment, with respect to the particular constellation at work.

While similar readings can be applied to the "barren rock" and Sung Wong Toi, what makes Lion Rock different from the two is its strong affinity to Hong Kong identity, culture, and spirit as the building blocks of Hong Kong localness. By

[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid., 114.

becoming a meaningful place and thing, Lion Rock—enveloped by a series of local spatialities and temporalities—observes different appearances of Hong Kong localness that change with time, and houses a pool of different values, ideals, and visions embraced by different generations under the changing socio-political landscapes of Hong Kong. Instead of seeing localness simply as a make-belief filled with indeterminacy, the analysis of Lion Rock in this chapter demonstrates the manifest content of localness that is comprised of things, places, and bodies, and its concrete impacts in cultural production and consumption (even when it is a partially a myth). It is discerned in this chapter that the changing conditions of society affect how localness is conceived and perceived. Meanwhile, the contrary acts of claiming and disowning Lion Rock as a symbol of localness—as it is reflected in the enchantment, disenchantment, and reenchantment of the rock—expose the entangling tendencies to territorialize, deterritorialize, and reterritorialize Lion Rock with respect to different degrees of cultural, emotional, and political attachment and detachment diffusing across different spheres. From a place and a thing in nature to a cultural symbol in representation and a cultural object in circulation, all these appearances of Lion Rock and their mediations repeatedly show us how different (largely unequal) forces make ceaseless attempts to claim their own stories of Hong Kong. After uncovering the cultural reverberations of Lion Rock and their reception in this chapter, different readerships of Hong Kong localness, and their operations will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 - Locations of Hong Kong Localness(es): *Ten Years* as a Crossing Point

A scene in the omnibus film *Ten Years* (2015), albeit imaginary, sets forth the direction for the discussion to take off in this chapter: in a typical covered market one can find in Hong Kong, a team of Youth Guards on patrol—alluding to the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution of China—demands a grocery store owner (played by Liu Kai-chi) to remove the word "local" from the label of his eggs. The store owner, who is about the age of their fathers, tries to reason with them and asks, "how would you, otherwise, describe the eggs that are from Hong Kong?" Staring at him with a blank face, these youngsters in uniform standing before the store owner are actually the schoolmates of his son. The store owner, without losing his patience, urges them to think critically,

> Why can I label them as Hong Kong eggs but not local eggs? Why can I use the term 'Hong Kong' but not 'local'?

As a boy around 10 years old, the leader of the group, nonetheless, replies by repeating automatically the order of their teachers, which is to remove every censored items from the list that they are given.

With the help of Kowloon King and his calligraphy, the idea of localnesses is introduced to deal with the different connotations carried by the word "local" across different contexts and disciplines. With an eye to Sung Wong Toi, localized relations, however preliminary and transient, are uncovered through different constellations of things, places, and bodies that are involved in emitting and transmitting different degrees of connectivity with the local. With Lion Rock, its cultural reverberations, and its impacts in the changing socio-political landscape, it is demonstrated that the notion of Hong Kong and that of local have become interwoven with one another since the late 1960s and the 1970s, and this coincides with what is widely agreed in the academia as the rise of local consciousness and the formation of a community-

driven Hong Kong cultural identity around the same time.[226] The close-to-seamless tie between Hong Kong and Hong Kong's local supports and is supported by the emergence of a local subjectivity in the population, albeit British colonialism. In this regard, the notion of local implies a reterritorialization not exactly in terms of political control, but through the cultural and social relations formed with the city—echoing to this is the academics' emphasis on the significance of the local-born generation in rejuvenating the local scenarios when compared to the early generations of immigrants.[227] Contrasting this are, however, the different attempts and tendencies to draw a line between Hong Kong and local in the postmillennial era—for instance, the definition of local put forward by the newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* (see Chapter 2) imposes a rigid separation between Hong Kong and Hong Kong's local, by dismissing the internal relations within the territory of Hong Kong on a local level, and amplifying the connection between Hong Kong and China on the national level.

Closely connected to this observation is the reciprocity of socio-political circumstances and cultural representations in influencing and shaping each other, which has been discussed in earlier parts of this thesis. Similarly, different understanding of local and the subsequent manifestations of localness not only mediate one another, but are also constantly remediated in the pool of sentiments, experiences, cultural memories drifting in the changing colonial, and quasi-postcolonial landscapes of Hong Kong. The fable-like scenario envisioned in *Ten Years* is indeed an exemplar of this: the film spreads fear, inasmuch as it raises concern in defence of rights and freedom one can (still) enjoy in Hong Kong. On the one hand, many scenes in the film enact the will of certain stakeholders in diminishing Hong Kong's local (for instance, the dispute over the terminology of 'Hong Kong' and 'local' in the segment "Local Egg"); on the other hand, the film is,

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[226] Selected research that provide in-depth study on the topic include:
Matthew Turner, "60s/90s: Dissolving the People," in *Hong Kong Sixties: Designing Identity*, eds. Matthew Turner, and Irene Ngan (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Arts Centre, 1994), 13-23.
Wing-sang Law, "The Present and the Past of Hong Kong Local Consciousness," 113-142.

[227] The distinctions made by Sociologist Lui Tai-lok concerning four generations of Hong Kong people are often quoted and discussed since its publication in 2007.
Tai-lok Lui 呂大樂, *Sidai Xianggangren* 四代香港人 [Four Generations of Hong Kong People] (Hong Kong: Step Forward Multimedia, 2007).
In addition to this, film scholar Cheuk Pak-tong also makes similar differentiation between the generations in arguing for the distinctiveness of Hong Kong New Wave cinema.
Pak-tong Cheuk, *Hong Kong New Wave Cinema (1978-2000),* 14.

ironically, slammed by these groups—the film is, for instance, harshly criticized by *Ta Kung Pao*, the same newspaper that ceaselessly tries to distinguish the "good" local from the "false" local. With all these complications in the background, the film and the various spectatorships formed upon its circulation and reception demonstrate how the idea of local is varyingly conceived and perceived not only in form of cultural representation, but also as a result of cultural expression and social response.

In regard to this, this chapter analyses different readerships of Hong Kong localness provoked by *Ten Years* which claim in their own different ways what represents Hong Kong, what can be deemed local, and what is not in the postmillennial era—these projections reflect not only different stagings of local through a myriad of things, places, and bodies as agencies, but also different magnitudes of their circulation and reception in the society. Vital to cultural analysis in the post-1997, post-Umbrella Movement context is therefore the uncovering of different momentums (i.e. unequal forces) that overlap, superimpose, and confront one another, as Hong Kong identity, and culture—underlined by these forces—are positioned and weighed differently, with respect to the different localnesses manifested in representations, and the different understanding of Hong Kong's local evoked accordingly. To this end, the discussion partaken in this chapter can be visualized as a crossing point of all these forces that are not equally distributed across the cultural, social, and political spheres.

Spectatorship and Readership: Things, Places, and Bodies in Cultural Movements

Despite the apparent abstraction and the ungraspable nature of local as a mental and theoretical concept, it has been insofar demonstrated in the examples examined in each chapter that local does pertain a material dimension as localness, when it is manifested, interpreted, and mediated through different cultural procedures including but not limited to representations, and the circulation of these representations. To this end, Greg Urban's theory of "metaculture" provides a useful framework that eloquently spells out the reciprocal relations of *Ten Years* the film itself, the 'Hong Kong' envisioned in the film, the spectatorships engendered by the film, and the readerships of Hong Kong localness that are subsequently exposed.

According to Urban's idea of "metaculture," abstract entities are not only connected to, but also have the chance to enter, the material realm through the process of circulation. The operation of culture, moreover, involves the dynamic movements of culture and cultural objects:

> Things in the world—objects of the senses, like ceramic pots or the flickering surface images of films projected onto a silver screen—brush up against, make contact with, ideas about those things. And the ideas come in this way to have effectiveness in the material realm. Something of the world gets into the idea, and something of the idea gets into the world.[228]

What appeals to the discussion here is Urban's acknowledgement of the agency and the material quality of the entities that are generally considered to be immaterial such as ideas, narratives, and representations. With respect to this, the key to decipher the operating procedures of these entities and their impacts is by scrutinizing the process of circulation and translation across different realms and media. As Urban tells us, "things in the world," and "ideas about those things" possess a mutual-shaping power, and hence play equally important roles in the movements of culture and cultural objects, be it generative, or degenerative. Echoing the concept of malleable materiality that was introduced in Chapter 1, Urban in his framework of "metaculture" also speaks of the need to transgress the rigid border of physicality: While physical contacts are instantaneous and phenomenological, any things, places, and bodies, in fact, cannot escape from being represented and hence mediated whenever an encounter is retold and a relation is struck—in the ongoing process of representation, circulation, and interpretation, agencies like things, places, and bodies that build up the textual world are indeed no less "material" and "tangible" than their counterparts in the situated reality upon mediation and remediation; the different relations subsequently formed, which are potentially intertextual, intermedial, interobjective, and intersubjective (as proven in the case of Sung Wong Toi), thereby engender different degrees of connectivity that bridge different time-spaces to

[228] Greg Urban, *Metaculture: How Culture Moves Through the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 4-5.

different extents.

In the case of *Ten Years*, the formation of different spectatorships, which guide different ways of interpreting and reacting to the film, precisely demonstrates the material impacts of a cultural representation, and the concretization of the emotional responses involved; the different spectatorships engendered, subsequently, lead to different readerships of Hong Kong localness(es) (with these readerships, different "locals" are reciprocally projected). The formation of different spectatorships, and the exposure of different readerships as such are, however, not an end-point to this analysis—what makes the discussion intriguing and challenging is indeed how these spectatorships and readerships interact and react in the presence of one another. By tracing these movements of their operation, the resultant forces of their contacts and conflicts can be revealed on the cultural, social, and political levels.

With an eye to the renewed conceptualization of materiality and its involvement in "metaculture," Urban's emphasis on the movement of culture and cultural objects maps out concretely the dynamics between things, places, and bodies in conceiving different constellations that are capable of extending impacts to different time-spaces upon their formation, circulation, and mediation. In the examples of Sung Wong Toi and Lion Rock, whether things and places that are geologically attached to the land and thereby literally local are understood as an embodiment of localness or not illustrates the variable connectivities between these things, these places, their human counterparts, and the understanding of Hong Kong's local at large across different contexts. Focusing on readership and spectatorship, the role of bodies is emphasized in mediating, transmitting, and translating different understandings of Hong Kong's local into manifestations of localness that are potentially attached to other things, places, and bodies, and vice versa. It is noteworthy that: On one side of the picture, what is understood as embodiment of localness (e.g. egg tart to Lawrence Pun;[229] coffee-milk tea to Leung Ping-kwan;[230] a

[229] Pun's example of egg tart is previously discussed in Chapter 2.
See, Pun, "Ten-year Transformation of 'Local."

Hong Kong-style tea restaurant to Chan Koon-chung;[231] Lion Rock [spirit] in the "Brand Hong Kong" campaign[232]) fundamentally exists as physical things and places with tangible materiality in the world we live in. On the other side of the picture, these entities—as various local cultural symbols—are bestowed with cultural memories, cultural connotations, values, and significances, where an intangible dimension is built up and through which localness is solicited. The manifold inscriptions on the notion of local, which has already been discussed in Chapter 2 as a travelling concept, will be revisited in this chapter in connection to the different readerships of Hong Kong localness. For the time being, the constructiveness and the arbitrariness of localness can be understood as a double-edged sword: with one blade, localness can be debunked through a deconstructionist approach; with the other blade, *localnesses*, after being evoked, empower one to trace different trajectories of cultural circulation and translation, in order to uncover the relations and the agencies involved.

Upon the circulation and the reception of *Ten Years*, a series of clashes and contacts took place as real events and sparked off arguments on the levels of the local, the national, and the international. With the help of Urban's theory of "metaculture," I

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[230] Leung Ping-kwan (Yasi)'s poem "Yuanyang" 鴛鴦 (Tea-coffee) published in 1997 can be read as a comment as well as a question on Hong Kong culture in face of changes. As he writes, "pour the tea/ into a cup of the coffee, will the aroma of one/ interfere with, wash out the other? Or will the other/ keep its flavour?" (translated by Martha Cheung). From the Chinese title of this poem, "Yuanyang/ *yuen yeung* (in Cantonese)" 鴛鴦 is a popular beverage in Hong Kong that can be served both hot and cold. It is a mix of coffee and Hong Kong-style milk tea (unlike what is suggested in the English title as coffee and tea only). The mix of milk tea and coffee also hints at the hybridized nature of Hong Kong's local.
Ping-kwan Leung, "Yuanyang" 鴛鴦 [Tea-coffee], in *Foodscape*, accessed October 10, 2016, http://xpia10.com/lksblog_pix/foodscape1.png.

[231] Chan Koon-chung's *Xianggang Sanbuqu* 香港三部曲 (Hong Kong Trilogy) is a compilation of three novellas written at three different times, namely "Taiyanggao de meng" 太陽膏的夢 (The Dream of Sunscreen) (alternative title: "Qianshuiwan" 淺水灣 [Repulse Bay]) (1978), "Shenme du meiyou fasheng" 甚麼都沒有發生 (Nothing happened) (1999), and "Jindu chacanting" 金都茶餐廳 (Cando Restaurant) (2003). The story of "Cando Restaurant" can be regarded as Chan's postmillennial reflection of Hong Kong: apart from being a dwelling place for common people, the Hong Kong-style tea restaurant itself is an embodiment of the hybrid culture of Hong Kong. The transliteration of the Cantonese sound "*gam dou*" to "can do" is also a reference to the typical can-do spirit which has been promoted in many Hong Kong stories including the Lion Rock narratives (see Footnote 231 below).
John Koon-chung Chan 陳冠中, "Jindu chacanting" 金都茶餐廳 [Cando Restaurant], in *Xianggang Sanbuqu* 香港三部曲 [Hong Kong Trilogy] (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 2004), 157-170.

[232] According to the Brand Hong Kong Campaign, the visual identity of Hong Kong contains "a silhouette of Lion Rock – a local landmark representing the "can-do" spirit of Hong Kong people."
Brand Hong Kong, "What is Brand Hong Kong?" accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.brandhk.gov.hk/html/en/BrandHongKong/WhatIsBrandHongKong.html.

choose to explore not only the fabrication of localness in the form of different things, places, and bodies, but also the processes of its representation, circulation, and mediation. With this in mind, my goal is not to pinpoint what can, or should be qualified as 'local,' but to explore the deeper cultural, social, and political connotations and impacts that can be extracted from these encounters and clashes. With this revolving door that connects the situated realities to the worlds constructed within texts, I put forward that what is manifested as 'local' in representations and what is regarded as 'local' in everyday life are reciprocal to one another, and mutually shape one another in a hermeneutic circle. To find a point to enter this hermeneutic circle, it is therefore necessary to evoke this revolving door through the spectatorships and the readerships involved in conceiving and perceiving different Hong Kong's 'locals' at work. In this regard, *Ten Years*, by portraying the alternative stories of Hong Kong, provides a point of entry to this enquiry: The different responses towards the stories of Hong Kong portrayed in the film facilitate the emergence of different spectatorships of the film, and hence reveal the different readerships of Hong Kong's local at work in the social, cultural, and political realms. To revisit Leung Ping-kwan's oft-mentioned contemplation made in the 1990s, the story of Hong Kong's local, in this case, is indeed another story that is hard to tell, as it is told by so many voices in the postmillennial era, and the term itself has become bestowed with so many contrasting connotations and applications.

The Stories of 2025 Hong Kong: 'Hong Kong' and 'Local'

Apparently, the alternative stories of Hong Kong rendered in *Ten Years* pose challenges to the conventional framework of growth and harmony that is promoted by the British Hong Kong government during colonial times and the Hong Kong SAR government in the post-1997 era. Following the talk of the "new Lion Rock spirit" during and after the Umbrella Movement, the emergence of stories as such reveals not only another moment of reflection where the future of the city is re-evaluated inasmuch as the present, but also the renunciation of the liberal-modernist framework and the collaborative power that shape the colonial and the quasi-postcolonial landscapes of Hong Kong before and after 1997.

As a collaboration work of five directors, *Ten Years*, consisting of five vignettes, can be regarded as a collective imagination of what Hong Kong would become in the year 2025, which is ten years after the film was made. The future of the city and its dwellers is envisioned in five scenarios, which involve political orders and exchanges in Kwok Zune's "Extras," the demolition of old buildings and districts in Wong Fei-pang's "Season of the End," the prioritization of Mandarin and the marginalization of Cantonese in Jevons Au's "Dialect," protests demanding for democracy and autonomy in Hong Kong, which result in violent riot controls and political sentences in Chow Kwun-wai's "Self-immolator," and, lastly, the forced indoctrination of state ideology through the implementation of censorship and the training of "youth guards" in Ng Ka-leung's "Local Egg." This dystopic projection of the city is one of the most daring and explicit cultural expressions that openly revokes not only the rosy picture painted by the British colonial government in the past, but also the ideal Hong Kong-China inseparable relationship that is put forward in the post-handover era of the city.

This story of Hong Kong in the year 2025, in this case, is both a projection of the city's future in a present tense and a representation of the present moment but in a future tense. In different scenarios presented by the film, the audience are forced to encounter a totally estranged 'Hong Kong': Familiar characteristics that shape the long-standing image of Hong Kong—such as the colloquial use of Cantonese as a language, the valorization of rights and freedom (such as the freedom of speech and expression), and the practice of apolitical education—all disappear, and are replaced by the use of Mandarin, authoritarian control, state censorship, and ideological indoctrination. On both the levels of production and reception, the disillusionment inscribed in these stories puts a sharp end to the hangover state of the city and its dwellers. With a defamiliarized Hong Kong in view, the film not only re-instils fear in the renewed story of Hong Kong, but also stirs up noises that ask to what extent a story as such can still be considered a Hong Kong story—similar to the question raised in the previous discussion of "Hong Kong literature" in Chapter 3, this is indeed to ask what "Hong Kong" means and signifies in the so-called "Hong Kong story."

Contrasting to the case of Lion Rock where 'Hong Kong' and 'local'

constellate and are constellated by one another, the endless disputes over what local is and is not in postmillennial Hong Kong are also embedded in the spectatorships engendered by *Ten Years* and the readerships exposed. In addition to this, the split of opinions on the subject matter have also caused 'Hong Kong' and 'local' to drift away from one another. Despite the complexity of the given situation, the different impression and understanding towards 'Hong Kong' and 'local' can indeed be treated as the residues of past experiences, and the refraction caused by different ideologies that have become more and more entangled in the recent decades. Intriguingly, one of the most telling encounters between 'Hong Kong' and 'local'—now as separate entities claiming their own significance after their split—is entailed in narratives that strategically aim to devalue the latter. *Global Times*, a China-based tabloid run by the state-owned newspaper *China Daily* that is known to speak for the authorities in mainland China, provides an example to this.

Global Times is among the first to disclose Beijing's opposition towards *Ten Years*, as the film was criticized in its editorial to be "absurd," "pessimistic," and "a virus of the mind."[233] Denouncing the film, *Global Times* claims that "it is impossible for the scenarios depicted in the film to take place in Hong Kong in ten years' time," and "even China is not like that."[234] The absurdity of the film, according to the argument made by the article, thereby comes from the film's absurd, unrealistic portrayal of Hong Kong. Alongside the omnipresent state ideology, the article apparently possesses a specific set of ideal images of Hong Kong and its own script for the story of Hong Kong to be told. On the one hand, the article's negative attitude towards the film is caused by the disparity between what is presented in *Ten Years*, and the "political correctness" approved by the authority in mainland China.[235] On the other hand, *Ten Years* is reprimanded for deluding the audience, as elements that

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[233] "S*hinian* xiahu Xianggang shehui, neidi guan buliao《十年》嚇唬香港社會，內地管不了 (*Ten Years* threatens Hong Kong society, out of Mainland's control)," *Global Times* 寰球時報, January 22, 2016, accessed April 5, 2016, http://opinion.huanqiu.com/editorial/2016-01/8425632.html.
As of 31 May 2016, the abovementioned article can no longer be found on the official website of *Global Times*, although other editorials published by *Global Times* around the same time are available. Traces of the concerned editorial can still be spotted on the Internet: as an article reposted by other websites, and in reportage made by several Hong Kong newspapers including *Mingpao Daily*, *Apple Daily*, and *Economic Journal*.

[234] Ibid.

[235] The term "political correctness" has a special meaning in the context of Hong Kong and China. See Footnote 69 in Chapter 2.

make Hong Kong 'Hong Kong' are absent in the film. In this regard, *Global Times*—by criticizing the discrepancy between the 'Hong Kong' constructed in the film and the 'Hong Kong' as the authority knows it—unconsciously confirms the endangering effect that is intentionally produced by the filmmakers to what they consider as Hong Kong's local, when relevant characteristics that are deemed 'essential,' or 'distinctive' to Hong Kong are erased. With an eye to this reactionary response of *Global Times*, the presence of distinctiveness in Hong Kong culture and identity is indeed laterally acknowledged even by a staunch denouncer of Hong Kong's local, despite the divide between the "Hong Kong" constellated by *Global Times*, and the "Hong Kong" with Hong Kong localness advocated by the filmmakers. This therefore exposes the ambivalent and contradictory attitude of *Global Times* in its ceaseless attempts to suppress any valorization of Hong Kong's local on the one hand, and its unconscious recognition of 'Hong Kong,' despite its own construction, on the other. To this end, the forceful split between 'Hong Kong' and 'local' is as well proven to be paradoxical and problematic; yet, the criticism made by *Global Times* does speak the mind of the authority in mainland China, while its source of energy is also shared with the unsupportive spectatorship of the film, which will be further discussed in later parts of this chapter.

Differing from *Global Times* and the spectatorship that follows a similar mind-set, the scriptwriters and the directors of the film who intentionally turned Hong Kong into an estranged space by ripping off its local characteristics are, on the contrary, advocators of Hong Kong's local. This is confirmed not only by their determination in funding the production of the film at their own expenses, but also by their insistence on conceiving a film project that caters to the domestic audience alone. To them, the intended absurdity of *Ten Years* is not far from the equally absurd situation faced by Hong Kong and its dwellers in real life at the present moment: The forced effacement of local characteristics, the marginalization of local language and culture, the diminishing priority enjoyed by the local population, and the distressed autonomous status of the city are taking place in post-handover Hong Kong; drastic changes—with a suggestive move towards the future projected by the film—are witnessed in the demolition of actual things and places (such as Central Star Ferry Pier, Queen's Pier, Lee Tung Street, and Choi Yuen Village) and in event of the

infringement of rights and the tightening of freedom (such as the government's attempt to pass the anti-subservience law in 2003, the repeated postponement of the implementation of genuine universal suffrage in the chief executive election, the Causeway Bay Bookstore Incident in 2016, and China's interpretation of Hong Kong's Basic Law on its own initiative in 2004 and 2016). As a point of intersection, *Ten Years* bring into the open topics that have never been told in any officially approved account of Hong Kong story, and these include the governance crisis of the Hong Kong SAR government, and the loss of confidence towards the "one country, two systems" policy and the promise of "remain[ing] unchanged for fifty years."[236] This new trajectory thereby reflects how the story of Hong Kong, previously with a conventional focus on its boom, has now become a story of doom that is filled with disillusionment and frustration of the population. In the Hong Kong story revised and rendered in *Ten Years*, the dissolution of hope and the fear of losing the status quo of Hong Kong bring the troubled psyche of the urban dwellers in the postmillennial era from a latent to a manifest level. While fear is triggered in view of the disappearance of what is considered local, these elements and characteristics in absence are therefore the determining factors that give distinctiveness to Hong Kong identity and culture in the postmillennial context of Hong Kong. Contrasting to the abovementioned unsupportive spectatorship, this alternative spectatorship is marked by the sharing of concern towards the extinction of Hong Kong localness, and is subsequently connected to a positive readership that is capable of decoding different manifestations of Hong Kong localness in representations.

From the Latent to the Manifest: Differentiating the Self from the Other

If local in the 1970s is what Lawrence Pun describes as something that differentiates the local lifestyle from colonial influences and norms set up under British

[236] During the discussion of Hong Kong's sovereignty, the principles of "one country two systems" and "fifty years of unchange" were agreed by both British and China concerning the administration of Hong Kong after 1997. The two principles were outlined in the annex of Sino-British Joint Declaration signed on 19 December 1984 that ratified the transferral of Hong Kong's sovereignty in 1997.
See, "Annex 1 Elaboration by the government of the People's Republic of China of its basic policies regarding Hong Kong," *Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Government Printer), 4.

colonialism, localnesses manifested and circulated in postmillennial Hong Kong provide a site where differentiation of all kinds takes place to suggest varying understanding of Hong Kong's local across the cultural, political, and social realms. In the following, the segment "Dialect" of *Ten Years* provides a case in point where Hong Kong's local, as it is conveyed in the film, is constantly produced through differentiation, and in this case, differentiation from the mainland China.

In the story narrated in "Dialect," Cantonese speakers ranging from office workers to taxi drivers are discriminated against in Hong Kong, whereas Mandarin speakers are given priority and opportunity. The plight of Cantonese speakers and the extinction of Cantonese language and culture are condensed into a day's experience of the protagonist, a frustrated taxi driver (played by Leung Kin-ping) who is marginalized by his fellow workers, his family, and society due to his inability to speak Mandarin—since he is labelled as a "non-Mandarin-speaking" service-provider, his taxi is forbidden from entering busy traffic zones including the airport, train terminals, and other transit areas of the city. To make matters worse, he faces the same frustration in his family life when he is instructed by his wife not to speak Cantonese to their son (since it might obstruct the young boy from learning well in school as Mandarin has become the official medium of instruction in 2025 Hong Kong[237]). Meanwhile, he finds it difficult to understand what his son tries to say not only in Mandarin, but also with Mandarin-transcribed foreign terms. The comical example presented in the film is the father's incomprehension towards the name of his son's idol, David Beckham, an English football player who has been a household name in Hong Kong for decades. The miscommunication between the father and the son is due to the language barrier, and the cultural differences which are inscribed in Cantonese and Mandarin—what is implied in this constructed case of miscommunication is not only the internal crisis of Hong Kong felt by the population where the local language, local culture, and local identity are on the verge of

[237] In 2003, the Standing Committee of Language Education and Research, an advisory board to the Hong Kong Government on language education issues and on the use of the Language Fund, stated in their report that the committee "fully endorses the Curriculum Development Council's long-term goal of teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua" (8).
Standing Committee of Language Education and Research. See, "Annex 1 – Summary of Recommendations," in *Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong – Final Report of Language Education Review*, June 27, 2003, accessed November 18, 2014. http://www.language-education.com/eng/doc/Download_PR-ActionPlan_Annex_1(E)_2003.06.27.pdf

extinction, but also the impression of intrinsic differences between Hong Kong and China on the linguistic, cultural, social, and political levels. The example of David Beckham is certainly a tip of the iceberg—as trivial as it might sound, the sightings of Mandarin-based terminologies, and simplified Chinese writings in the city are in real life the source of attention and tension in post-1997 Hong Kong.[238] Collective concerns as such reflect anxiety and insecurity in face of the potential "mainlandization" of Hong Kong, which can be witnessed in the economic sphere (e.g. the signing of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement [CEPA] in 2004) and in the political realm (e.g. China's interpretation of Hong Kong's Basic Law). On the one hand, what is revealed in all these instances is the fear towards the closening of the gap between Hong Kong and China which is recognized, for instance in the context of *Ten Years*, to be an external threat to the local. Ironically, Cantonese, known and practiced as a mother tongue of generations of Hong Kong people, thrived during the colonial era, but is subject to marginalization in post-1997 Hong Kong. In the special case of Hong Kong which is often considered as a predicament, the 'mother' tongue and the 'mother-'land actually

[238] The difference in terminology and transcription used in Hong Kong and China is observed by the Official Languages Agency of the Hong Kong government in a newsletter published in 2003. One example is the naming the State of Virginia of the United States of America: "*wai chun nei ah*" 維珍尼亞 (in Cantonese) in Hong Kong and "*fu ji ni ya*" 弗吉尼亞 (in Mandarin) in China. By tracing the origin of Hong Kong's transcription, the author of the article explicates how the technique of translation is at the same time embedded in the phonetic transcription of the term. The author also makes explicit his/her preference on the humanistic and artistic image painted by the Hong Kong terminology.
However, over the recent years, an increasing number of terms used in mass media are dropped from the linguistic convention practiced in Hong Kong and are replaced by terminology used in China. Considering the State of Virginia, *Singtao Daily*, a newspaper in Hong Kong, adapted China's transcription of the term "*fu ji ni ya*" 弗吉尼亞 (which sounds "*fat gat nei ah*" in Cantonese) as early as in 2000. In 2000, 20 out of 22 records applied the Hong Kong terminology as "wai chun nei ah" 維珍尼亞; by 2013, the proportion is totally reversed in 2013: out of 13 articles, only 1 follows the conventional transcription in Hong Kong.
Cultural observers and critics such as Chip Tsao and Au Man Hoi were alarmed by the situation, and the phenomenon was repeatedly discussed in their newspaper columns: Tsao in *Apple Daily* (April 4, 2007; August 6, 2010; August 28, 2011; September 26, 2013; December 19, 2013), and Au in *Mingpao Daily* (April 24, 2007) and *Singtao Daily* (April 23, 2007).
For example,
Chip Tsao, "Fuji fengbao" 弗吉風暴 [The Storm of Fat Gat], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, April 4, 2007, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/supplement/columnist/art/20070424/7031998.
Chip Tsao, "Xianggang wuzige" 香港無資格 [Hong Kong is not qualified], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, August 6, 2010, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/supplement/columnist/art/20100806/14315309.

do not coincide—the paradoxical situation where the mother tongue is indeed not supported by the so-called 'mother'-land thereby challenges the idea of "post-" in the so-called 'post'-colonial setting of the city.

Under this circumstance, the anti-China sentiments that are built up in the society over the past two decades—which is often juxtaposed with the emergence of radical localism in the form of political parties and manifestos—are rooted in the fear arisen in Hong Kong concerning the threat of the Other, the risk of being engulfed by the Other, and hence the loss of the Self. To this end, the fear of the Other indeed weighs equally as an internal crisis that is felt from 'the within,' which emerges as social cleavage, and the wide split of public opinion in the society. On the other hand, this, nevertheless, concretizes the presence of a local subjectivity, however fragile and sensitive it is, in the post-1997 era. To this end, the extensive use of colloquial Cantonese not only as an utterance but also as an expression of localness has become more and more popular in recent years, and is perceived by a considerable proportion of the population as a subversion and even resistance to the hegemony that is represented by the authorities, the establishment, and institutionalising forces. The popularity of Pang Ho-cheung's *Vulguria* 低俗喜劇 (2012) stems from the massive use of profanity, sex jokes, and Cantonese slangs, wherein Cantonese and Cantonese speakers not only yearn to be heard and represented, but they also find an outlet to finally channel their distress and discontent.[239] Referring the source of its humour to a "Hong Kong style," the satirical magazine *100 most* that is published weekly since 2013 is another exemplar to show how the use of Cantonese becomes a marker and a

[239] *Vulgaria*—as a Category III film that is restricted to an audience under the age of 18—is the highest-grossing local production of the year 2012 in Hong Kong. Even by taking into account all Chinese-language films including Hong Kong-China co-productions that were released in the same year, *Vulgaria*, with a sole focus on the local market that had been decided before the shooting of the film, managed to secure the second place in the box office chart. The popularity and the commercial success of the film are seen by many as an exhilarating moment for the much distressed film-making environment in Hong Kong after the signing of CEPA with China. For instance, Evans Chan, also a filmmaker himself, in an academic paper describes *Vulgaria* as "a smart film arriving at the most sensitive moment of a socio-political tug-of-war between Hong Kong and the mainland, the South and the North, since the inception of Chinese cinema(s) has become a specimen of a critical geo-cinema vis-à-vis the PRC" (220). See,
Evans Chan, "Postmodernity, Han Normativity and Hong Kong Cinema," in *A Companion to Hong Kong Cinema*, eds. Esther M.K. Cheung, Gina Marchetti, and Esther C. M. Yau (Oxford: Blackwell, 2014), 207-236.
"A Collection of Information about Hong Kong Film Industry 2012," Hong Kong Film Development Council, 2013.

holder of localness in post-1997 Hong Kong.[240] Written in Cantonese, *100 most*, like *Vulguria*, plays with jokes, puns, and at times invented words and terms that can hardly be transmitted to any non-Cantonese speaking sphere. While the magazine is known for its out-of-the-box thinking and at times nonsensical ideas, and is simultaneously a keen producer of derivative works by rewriting popular lyrics, parodying photographic images, and others, these strategies not only attract laughter from its readers; but with an attention to social happenings, political issues, and government's policies, the magazine also provides sharp criticism through humour and satirism. Its outspoken supportive stance towards pro-democracy campaigns like the Umbrella Movement is one example to this. Last but not least, the book *Hoeng Kong jyu man: teng Can Leoi Si gei bei mat* 香港語文: 聽陳蕾士嘅秘密 [Cantonese Model Essay: The secret of Can Leoi Si], published in 2016 through crowd-funding, seeks to rewrite canonical Chinese texts that are collected in the school curriculum of the Chinese-language subject in Hong Kong by Cantonese. The book, following the layout of a stereotypical textbook, is constituted of "model" texts, original texts, annotations, discussion questions, and an overview of the text. Apart from the original text, every other part of the book is written in Cantonese. On the one hand, the remodelling of the "model essay," with a shift from the original text to its rendition in Cantonese, reveals the inscription of a growing local subjectivity through the creative and purposeful application of Cantonese in post-1997 Hong Kong. On the other hand, by fulfilling its purpose of assisting Cantonese-speaker in comprehending 'Chinese' texts, the book nonetheless comforms the linguistic differences between the two languages. With an eye to these three examples, the use of Cantonese not only attributes significance and distinctive characteristics to what is understood as Hong Kong identity and culture in the contexts they situate in, but also positions local as a differential marker of the Other. Localness, in this regard, operates as the recognition and the manifestation of local distinctiveness.

To this end, the context where the question of the "local egg" is raised—as it was recounted in the beginning of this chapter—offers a plane where the two abovementioned spectatorships crisscross with one another. Like "Dialect," the story

[240] "Qi qi mai ba wan ben, '100 mao' san ge yue shouzhi pingheng" 期期賣8萬本 《100毛》3個月收支平衡 [80,000 copies sold per week, break-even after three months], *Hong Kong Economic Journal* 經濟日報, May 24, 2013.

of “Local Egg” revolves around a father and a son. The father (played by Liu Kai-chi), who runs a grocery store in the wet market, is a keen supporter of local products; whereas the young son, usually seen quiet, is seemingly ignorant to his father’s worries, which include the difficulty in finding a new egg provider (the last chicken farm in Hong Kong is shut down, due to the unsupportive measures laid down by the government towards local industries), the ideologically indoctrinated teachings and activities in his school (in a parental notice, his father is informed that parents have no rights to inquire, nor to intervene, what is taught in school and what is planned by the “Youth Guards”), and the problem of censorship faced in everyday life (the use of the term “local” is harshly banned by the authority). Echoing to the earlier discussion of differentiation, the film projects the withering of Hong Kong’s local, in the aspects of language, culture, and social life, by the politicization of education, and the implementation of censorship, where state ideologies and the collective values set down by the political regime in mainland China are uninterruptedly practiced in Hong Kong. As it was discussed earlier, ‘local’ in the eyes of the supporters of Hong Kong distinctive localness (including the filmmakers themselves) is instrumental to differentiating Hong Kong from China: By giving light to local relations, different things, places, and bodies that characterize Hong Kong that are created and are thereby made to circulate; in reciprocal, intensifying local relations is to reterritorialize Hong Kong by disentangling the neo-colonizing forces that are at work in the territory. When the rising local consciousness in the postmillennial era has an urge to reclaim Hong Kong from the Other, an oppositional force—which is endorsed, for instance, by the discourse propagated by *Global Times* and *Ta Kung Pao*, among others—simultaneously tries in vain to detach the idea of ‘local’ and any connection to it from the understanding of ‘Hong Kong.’

In the following, the operation of these contrasting forces is examined in connection to two prominent forms of spectatorship that are generated upon the circulation and the reception of *Ten Years*. With an eye to their major difference in the supportive and the unsupportive stances they hold towards the film, I name them respectively as the “supportive spectatorship” and the “unsupportive spectatorship” for the sake of easy distinction during my discussion. In spite of a general positioning as such, it is important to clarify that I do not intend to put forward an “either/or”

framework in dismissing the presence of other spectatorships and their potentiality. These two spectatorships certainly do not constitute the whole picture concerning the audience's opinions of the film; they are, however, the object of analysis here, owing to their outspoken attitudes and reactions towards the topic of local. Their different treatments of Hong Kong localness are exposed not only in the their formation (as a spectatorship), but also in the circulation, and the mediation between the two spectatorships involved. On the one hand, the two spectatorships embody two apparently oppositional readerships of Hong Kong localness: one that is about valorization while the other about denunciation. Within each spectatorship, there are nonetheless different internal variations concerning how Hong Kong's local is perceived. To this end, the multiple readings of Hong Kong localness—practised through different readerships—precisely yield to the appearance of Hong Kong localnesses. On the other hand, their common attention to "local" is in itself an acknowledgement, be it positive or negative, conscious or unconscious, of Hong Kong's local that is deemed disseminated by the film. The interaction and the entanglement between the two spectatorships can therefore be regarded as network of crossing points where different unequal voices in postmillennial Hong Kong are at work across the cultural, social, and political spheres.

Undoing Hong Kong Localness?

To begin with, the unsupportive spectatorship occupies primarily an oppositional position against the supportive spectatorship, where it is particularly active in opposing the support gathered and the circulation gained by *Ten Years*, and in disowning how Hong Kong localness is conceived and perceived by its counterpart. To be accurate, the unsupportive spectatorship is not exactly comprised of a group of audience who does not identify themselves with what the film portrays, but it is based on those voices that aim to reject the value system, the discourse, the readership of Hong Kong localness of the supportive spectatorship as a whole.

In many instances, the unsupportive spectatorship follows the political ideology promoted by the political regime in mainland China, and this is particularly obvious when the idea of local is almost unreflectively categorized into something sensitive and even "separationist" by nature in discussions led by this group. The

article released in *Global Times*, where *Ten Years* was harshly slammed, was revealed previously to be a paradoxical take between the disavowal of localness and the justified presence of Hong Kong's characteristics but as something that are not encouraged to be called 'local.'[241] Likewise, the term "independent film," when mentioned in the same article, is unusually bracketed by a pair of double quotation marks—the hypersensitivity embedded in the article, from where the unsupportive spectatorship is seeded, is perhaps beyond imagination, but is, nonetheless, necessary to be taken into account during the analysis. Without any institutional funding and support, *Ten Years* is produced as an independent film project—the independent mode of production is obviously a fact addressing the circumstance under which the film is made; however, the article's intent to single out the term "independent film" implies that the voice backing up the article is unconvinced by the objectivity of the term and is unwilling to take up the neutrality of the term upon application—this echoes to what has been delineated in Chapter 2, where the idea of "independence," when applied in discourses that uphold the state ideology of mainland China, often carries a politicized connotation, where the notion of local to be condemned, according to this logic, shares the same separationist intention. What is uncovered here is therefore a totally different signification system at work in voices that embrace, to different degrees, the state ideology of mainland China. By examining the constituency of the unsupportive spectatorship, its underlying goal to dismiss and undo Hong Kong localness is also unfolded. With an eye to the plurality of localnesses, it is important to note that the 'Hong Kong localness' as the target to erase is, among others, one that is conceived and perceived by the unsupportive spectatorship. The aforementioned paradox can be seen again in view of the aim to eradicate, for instance, what is put forward as "false local" by *Ta Kung Pao*, and the unconscious acknowledgement of the presence of such particular facet of localness in the society. The complication imposed on the naming of a "local egg" in the film is therefore not entirely imaginary, if one takes into consideration the criticism towards Hong Kong's local made by *Global Times*, *Ta Kung Pao*, among others, and followed by the unsupportive spectatorship formed. Moreover, the unsupportive spectatorship

[241] *Global Times,* January 22, 2016.

does encompass its own readership of 'localness,' which is, oxymoronically speaking, a construction that is aimed to be ridded of. This is, for instance, revealed in the article's accusation of the "jiduan fanduipai" 極端反對派 (extremist-oppositionist), the "fanduipai" 反對派 (oppositionist), and the "Xianggang ziyoupai zhishifengzi" 香港自由派知識分子 (Hong Kong intellectuals) for using *Ten Years* to disseminate horror and the "virus of the mind" in Hong Kong—without any further explanation from the article, what these groups actually represent, and whether they are names for the same group or not remain unknown. Regardless of the abstraction and the ambivalence presented in the article, the appearance of these groups in this context is, on the one hand, a materialization of what the article considers as "oppositional"—this opposition is, however, a relative position conceived and perceived by the article alone. On the other hand, these groups, precisely due to their ambiguity, reveal the arbitrary construction of the Other, such that a target, which is understood in the article as *Ten Years* as well as the supporters of the film, is set up to take up blames and attacks.

Not surprisingly, the film was banned by the Beijing authority from being shown in mainland China. Added to this is a full eradication of the film and related information about it: not only that related discussions and news feeds on the internet in general and in social networks in particular were all censored, the broadcast of the 2016 Hong Kong Film Awards ceremony was also dropped in mainland China, after the film was shortlisted for the Best Film Award. As the award ceremony has been aired by the state-owned television channel China Central Television (CCTV) in mainland China since 1991, it shows the Chinese authority's determination to prevent even the name of the film from entering its territory. Meanwhile, online merchandising platforms such as Google Playstore and Apple iTunes Store were removed in China after the film was available for purchase there—although there is no official explanation given to these actions of the Chinese government, many people were not convinced of a mere coinciding of these events.[242] With reference to Urban's notion of cultural movement, the complete arrestation of the film and its movement in mainland China seemingly implies that Hong Kong localness indeed has

[242] "As *Ten Years* lands on iTunes in Hong Kong, Apple says service shut down in China," *South China Morning Post*, April 22, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/culture/film-tv/article/1937744/ten-years-lands-itunes-hong-kong-apple-says-service-shut-down-china.

a geographical, political, and even cultural boundary in terms of circulation and interpretation.[243]

In Hong Kong, China's state censorship is not allowed by law to be in effect; however, the activities of the unsupportive spectatorship are built on traces of self-censorship not only among its members, but also in the society as a whole. At the 35th Hong Kong Film Awards ceremony that took place on the April 3, 2016, director Derek Yee, also the award committee's chairman of that year, jokingly revealed how a junior scriptwriter who worked for the event approached him and asked whether the name of this controversial film could be mentioned in the event script. What's more, Yee drew the spectators' attention to the reason why no one else but him was on stage to present the Best Film Award, which was supposed to be the climax of the evening —"no one dares to take the risk of calling forth this one such film. Well, you know why," said Yee satirically to his fellow film workers, who were all well dressed and well groomed in this glamorous setting, and to the television spectators in Hong Kong and regions outside mainland China who, unaffected by the censorship in China, could still freely watch the live broadcast of the ceremony. Before announcing the result of the award, Yee, by quoting Franklin D. Roosevelt, told the spectators, "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."[244] To everyone's surprise, *Ten Years* was crowned the Best Film of the year.

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[243] Intriguingly, the expression of an interest or a curiosity towards the film *Ten Years* in mainland China is revealed in the numerous attempts to illegally download the film. On several websites frequently visited by netizens in China, the film "*Ten Years*" claims a high position in the popular download chart—only that the film that is available for download turns out to be a romantic comedy sharing the same name, which is not exactly the one they are looking for. This "misencounter" actually suggests a semi-permeable level where Hong Kong localness could be a potential site of contact between Hong Kong and China. Ironically, this exchange is forbidden by the authorities who always encourage a Hong Kong-China 'link,' but in designated 'safe zones' like the economic sphere and the historical aspect. Apart from this, the circulation of the film but in the negative space is also a driving force that propels the generation and the movement of the supportive spectatorship which will be discussed in latter parts of this chapter.
Chantel Yuen, "2011 US romantic comedy *Ten Years* 2nd most popular download in China after namesake wins award," *Hong Kong Free Press*, April 6, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/04/06/2011-us-romantic-comedy-ten-years-2nd-most-popular-download-in-china-after-namesake-wins-award/.
"China downloaders seeking Hong Kong-set *Ten Years* get *10 Years*, Hollywood rom-com, instead," *South China Morning Post*, April 7, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/film-tv/article/1934107/china-downloaders-seeking-hong-kong-set-ten-years-get-10-years.

[244] In the original context, the then U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered the line in the beginning of his inaugural address made on March 4, 1933.
"Inaugural Address. March 4, 1933," in *The Public Papers of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Volume Two: The Year of Crisis, 1933*, ed. Samuel Rosenman (New York: Random House, 1938), 11.

In view of this, the unsupportive spectatorship, in no surprise, became more high profile and outspoken in devaluing *Ten Years*. On the next day after the award ceremony, *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wenweipo*, both as China-funded Chinese-language newspapers in Hong Kong, took the lead in criticizing *Ten Years* and doubting the result of the long-running film award. For instance, *Ta Kung Pao* published an editorial condemning *Ten Years* and the Hong Kong Film Award committee for "defaming the 'one country two systems' policy," and "promoting the idea of 'Hong Kong independence' that provokes confrontation and separatism."[245] The same editorial also accused Hong Kong filmmakers of "destroying the professionalism of the Hong Kong filmmaking industry," since awarding *Ten Years* the Best Film was, according to the newspaper, a "politicized" decision and the award itself was thus turned into something "political." [246] This argument proposed by *Ta Kung Pao* is again an eloquent exemplar of how Hong Kong's local is generally (mis)understood by the ruling party on the mainland without any differentiation of its different manifestations and connotations in the social, cultural, and political contexts. The monotonous interpretation is also revealed in the uncanny similarity of the articles published by *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wenweipo*, where the use of similar wordings and phrases is ideologically coupled up with the mentality they share in disowning the significances that are bestowed to *Ten Years* through its support and recognition gained from the local community. Apart from media groups as such, individuals also join in to assert the influence of this unsupportive spectatorship. For instance, Peter Lam Kin-Ngok, the owner of Media Asia Entertainment Group from Hong Kong who also carries titles such as the appointed chairman of Hong Kong Tourism Board, and the appointed member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, openly condemns the result of the Hong Kong Film Award in a newspaper's interview:

> it is a misfortune for the Hong Kong film making industry, as *Ten Years* won the Best Film Award without any nomination in other categories [in the

[245] "*Shinian* hai Gang daotui shinian"《十年》害港倒退十年 (*Ten Years* drags Hong Kong backwards for ten years), *Ta Kung Pao* 大公報, April 5, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://news.Ta Kung Pao.com.hk/paper/q/2016/0405/3301787.html.

[246] According to the rules of election of the Hong Kong Film Awards, the election is indeed fairly democratic and broadly representative. For details, see footnote 250.

same award], without being a box office hit, and without the quality of a Best Film.[247] (my translation)

In a meantime, Raymond Wong Bak-ming, a producer of several blockbuster hits in Hong Kong and China including the most recent *Ip Man* series, also challenges the legitimacy of the Film Award and the representability of *Ten Years* being the best Hong Kong film of the year. It was, however, revealed in the same interview that Wong, like Lam, had not seen the film *Ten Years* at all, but Wong insisted that his judgement was based on the budget spent on *Ten Years* and the subject matter rendered in the film—"how good a film can be if it is only made with a budget of 500,000 Hong Kong dollars?" said Wong.[248] Coincidentally, the editorials of *Ta Kung Pao and Wenweipo* also give similar comment about the impossibility of conceiving the Best Film of the year with such a low budget. By making such a claim, it seems that these film producers from Hong Kong are ignorant of the fact that *Ten Years* is indeed not the first indie film to win this title in the history of Hong Kong cinema: Fruit Chan's feature-length debut *Made in Hong Kong* (1997), which is the first instalment of his Hong Kong trilogy, not only was crowned the Best Film in 1998, but had also gained recognition, local and abroad, as an independent film. Nonetheless, the making of this film is described as a "legendary story," since the film was shot on expired film reels (which had been expired for more than seven years) by a crew with five members only and, like *Ten Years*, with the same humble budget of 500,000 Hong Kong Dollars.[249]

While the reactions of Beijin and the pro-Beijing camp towards the subject matter of Hong Kong localness are somehow predictable, what cannot be predicted even to them is indeed the result of the Hong Kong Film Awards. Established in 1982,

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[247] "Lin Jianyue zhi *Shinian* de jiang shi Xianggang dianyingjie de buxing, cheng zhengzhi bangjia le zhuanye" 林建岳指《十年》得獎是香港電影界的不幸, 稱政治綁架了專業 [*Ten Years* is Hong Kong film industry's misfortune, politics has kidnapped professionalism, says Peter Lam Kin-ngok], *Mingpao Daily* 明報, April 3, 2016, accessed June 2, 2016, http://news.mingpao.com/ins/instantnews/web_tc/article/20160404/s00001/1459705541641.

[248] "Cheng wei kan guo *Shinian,* Huang Baiming ping huo jiang shi 'xiao hua,' 'ji da cuo wu,' ling Xianggang dian ying dao tui shi nian" 稱未看過《十年》, 黃百鳴評獲獎是「笑話」、「極大錯誤」, 令香港電影倒退十年 [Never watched *Ten Years*, but naming *Ten Years* the Best Film is a 'joke,' and a 'mistake' driving Hong Kong film industry ten years backward, says Raymond Wong Pak-ming', *Mingpao Daily* 明報, April 4, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://news.mingpao.com/ins/instantnews/web_tc/article/20160404/s00001/1459772124196.

[249] Esther M.K. Cheung, *Fruit Chan's Made in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), 5.

the Hong Kong Film Awards aims to recognize distinguished achievement made in the Hong Kong filmmaking industry every year. The Film Award Association consists of 13 executive committees that represent film workers of different positions ranging from producers, screenwriters, stuntmen, cinematographers, directors, editors to performing artists. The Board of Directors and the Voting Affairs Committee formed under The Hong Kong Film Awards Association are made up of equal-numbered representatives coming from the 13 executive committees. Basically, all Hong Kong film workers, active film critics and invited persons professed in film education and artiste management can register to be a voter in the first round election, after which no more than five films are shortlisted in every award category. In addition to this, any film that meets the criteria of a "Hong Kong film" and has been firstly released in theatres in Hong Kong is automatically included in the first-round election. The final results of the award are generated from the second-round election, which is partaken by all members of the 13 executive committees, members of the Composers and Authors Society Of Hong Kong, and 55 "professional adjudicators" invited by the Voting Affairs Committee. The voting system is apparently democratic and is capable of representing different professional sectors in the Hong Kong filmmaking industry. This therefore exposes the flaws in the criticism made by *Ta Kung Pao*—for instance, its accusation of *Ten Years* in "hijacking the filmmaking industry and the audience by the opinions of the minority" is totally invalid, since the awards are generated by the most number of votes based on the "one person, one vote" mechanism.[250]

Moreover, despite the fact that I call what I delineated so far a "spectatorship," evidence shows that representatives of this group are not necessarily spectators who had really watched the film (e.g. film investor Peter Lam, and film producer Raymond Wong abovementioned); however, the conspicuous operation of the group does demonstrate traits of a certain "spectatorship" owing to their collective stance and intense engagement in disowning what *Ten Years* and its supporters embody

[250] According to the Hong Kong Film Awards, a film can be qualified to be a "Hong Kong film" if any two of the following criteria are met: (1) the film directors must be a Hong Kong resident and holds a Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card, (2) at least one of the film presenters is legally registered in Hong Kong SAR, or (3) at least six persons from different working positions respectively, are Hong Kong residents and hold Hong Kong Permanent Identity Cards. For details, see
"The 35th Hong Kong Film Awards: Rules of Election," *Hong Kong Film Awards*, accessed Ocotber 10, 2016, http://www.hkfaa.com/rules2015_eng.html.

concerning the idea of 'local' in relation to Hong Kong culture, identity, and other affairs. Ironically, the unsupportive spectatorship, despite its aim to suppress the expansion of Hong Kong localness, gears the supportive spectatorship to grow even stronger and acquire a more concrete form of appearance.

Different Readerships of Hong Kong Localnesses

By growing and casting its influence in the positive space, the presence of a supportive spectatorship is evident in the popularity of the film, and the high circulation of the film in the local community that is facilitated by the supporters. After its premier at the Hong Kong Asian Film Festival in November 2015, *Ten Years* was first experimentally released in December the same year but in just one theatre, the Broadway Cinematheque which is specialized in screening non-mainstream productions. The experiment was proven not to be a failure at all since, by the end of the month, more theatres—including independent cinemas like *Ma On Shan Classics Cinema*, and *Metroplex*, and chained circuits like selected UA cinemas—joined in to screen the film. Meanwhile, the local audience's support of the film is reflected in its unusually stable box office performance and its high full-house frequency over a period of 58 days, which is relatively long especially for a local independent production.[251] When the film was officially removed from the silver screen in February 2016, the film had grossed over 5 million Hong Kong dollars (which is ten times its budget), and was listed consecutively for four weeks as the Top 10 highest grossing films of the week. How much a film can earn in the commercial circuit is certainly not a benchmark in judging the significance of a film; however, given the limited number of seats offered by no more than seven theatres showing the film at one time, what the film had achieved is almost miraculous, especially when the domestic market is always believed to be driven by commercial concerns and entertainment values.[252] Moreover, with continuous attacks fired by the unsupportive spectatorship, the box office performance of *Ten Years*, having attested under

[251] "*Ten Years*: Hong Kong film that beat *Star Wars* at the box office, and the directors behind it," *South China Morning Post*, December 29, 2015, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/film-tv/article/1895992/ten-years-hong-kong-film-beat-star-wars-box-office-and-directors.

[252] In addition to the arthouse cinema *Broadway Cinematheque* and the two independent cinemas *Metroplex* and *Ma On Shan Classic Cinema*, the screenings of Ten Years were picked up by *MCL Star Cinema*, *Megabox UA*, *Taikoo UA*, and *UA Cine Moko*.

adversity, does reflect the demand of the local audience and their support to the film in the domestic market.

The popularity of the film can yet be comprehensively measured just by the box office performance, as part of its circulation actually takes place beyond the commercial circuit. Due to the high demand of the film, theatrical screenings conducted by the commercial circuit was found to be insufficient in accommodating all the wilful spectators of the film. In view of this, the film was screened in tertiary education institutions, some privately rented venues, and among others, even during its theatrical release. On April 1, 2016, two days before the Hong Kong Film Awards, *Ten Years* was screened simultaneously in 34 locations scattering around the city, with the voluntary participation of over 34 organizations including students' associations from different universities, community colleges and other higher educational institutions, community groups (e.g. *Sai Wan Concern, Pound Lane Concern Group, Good Day Wanchai, Paper Shau Kei*), pro-democracy advocacy groups (e.g. *Mobile Democracy Classroom*, *Power for Democracy*, *Umbrella Blossom*), non-profit organizations (e.g. *Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centre*, *The Salvation Army Yaumatei Integrated Service for Young People*), and others (theatre group, religious group, district councillor office, and residents' group etc.).[253] The fluid, creative circulation of the film is reflected in the unconventional venues borrowed for screening, ranging from communal space such as school halls and community halls, made-shift space like street corner and empty place below the flyover, repurposed space like the rooftop of an industrial building, to defiant space like the protest area of the Legislative Council. In this active expansion of the supportive spectatorship, the film not only creates resonance among viewers concerning the pressing issues witnessed by the local population and the sentiments accumulated over the recent years; meanwhile, the emergence of an active spectatorship as such also bears a participatory nature and a re-creative power—as it is shown in the fluid circulation of the film, interactions and connections are established not only between viewers, but also between individuals, communities,

[253] "Hong Kong's dystopian film *Ten Years* screened to huge crowds across the city following overwhelming public demand," *South China Morning* Post, April 2, 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1932954/hong-kongs-dystopian-film-ten-years-screened-huge.

urban spaces, and different things that make up the 'Hong Kong' that they identify with as a whole. By peeping into the operation of the supportive spectatorship, this vantage point thereby provides a key to unlock the revolving door that connects the storied world portrayed in narrative (e.g. the imaginary Hong Kong portrayed in *Ten Years*) and the situated reality (Hong Kong as a lived space) together.

In this way, the Hong Kong localness as it is conceived and perceived through the film is allowed to travel and evolve in the rhizomatic network of relations between urban dwellers, and the things and places in the city. The film-viewing experience thereby envelops a personal aspect that criss-crosses experiences of the everyday life as well as the emotional responses induced by the film, and a collective aspect that contributes to the growing sense of belonging and togetherness, which is transmitted between cultural representations and the situated reality. The exceptionally high demand for the film actually reveals the resonance between the subject matters portrayed in the film and the actual social reality lying outside the scope of cinema, inasmuch as different means of support, ranging from participating in screening sessions to facilitating the circulation of the film, are widely considered as a performance of Hong Kong local identity. Inscribed in the operation and the circulation of the supportive spectatorship are thus the aspiration of community building and the fabrication of local identity, which can also be observed in community-driven campaigns of different scales that took place in Hong Kong in the postmillennial era. While social activism that is carried out, for instance, in the Central Star Ferry Pier preservation campaign, and the Queen's Pier preservation campaign is regarded by many as a sign symbolizing the rise of local consciousness in post-handover Hong Kong, the film, to this end, acts not only as an artistic expression that solicits a cultural representation of 'local' as it is understood by the filmmakers and the supporters of the film; but the supportive spectatorship itself can also be interpreted as a manifestation of local consciousness that is closely connected to community concern and identity construction in the post-1997 era of Hong Kong.

Last but not least, it is noteworthy that the circulation of the film, be it in the positive or the negative space, is as a whole a highly mediated event, where the supportive and the unsupportive spectatorships are seen in the presence of one another. Released one day before the editorial of *Global Times*, CNN published an

article where *Ten Years* is described as a "success" and a "box office hit" that outperformed the international blockbuster *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* in the only cinema where the film was screened. The article not only conducted interviews with three of the five directors, but also juxtaposed what is imagined in *Ten Years* to the socio-political context of Hong Kong. From the Umbrella Movement in 2014, to the Causeway Bay Bookstore incident in 2016, the article traces the source of the fear portrayed in the film from the everyday life of Hong Kong people through social happenings and political events.[254] Addressing the same phenomenon, *Global Times* on the next day, however, proposes a totally opposite view by slamming the Hong Kong market as something "small and narrow," and the portrayal of Hong Kong in the film as "absurd" and "terrifying."[255] This editorial released by *Global Times* subsequently caught the attention of Hong Kong people, as the criticism made was reported by various local news platforms including but not limited to newspapers like *Apple Daily*, radio stations like *RTHK*, television news channels like *Now News*, and online news agencies like *The Stand News*.[256] Since then, each action partaken by the unsupportive spectatorship—ranging from the criticisms against the film and the cancellation of the broadcast of the Hong Kong Film Awards ceremony, to the black-

[254] The Causeway Bay Bookstore Incident was uncovered in January 2016, when the booksellers working for the bookstore, which is specialized in printing and distributing books that concern sensitive and taboo subject matters in mainland China, consecutively disappeared. For instance, Gui Manhai, holding a Swedish passport, was taken away in Thailand and later reappeared in a video clip released by the Chinese authority, wherein Gui claimed that he was involved in a traffic accident in China; Lee Po, with British citizenship, was abducted in Hong Kong and reappeared in China. Both Gui and Lee had no official record of having left their original place of location and crossed the border to China. These cases had stirred up a lot of noises in Hong Kong, and had caught the alarm of the media, local and abroad. Lam Wing-kee, the founder of the bookstore who had also gone missing since 2015 showed up in Hong Kong and organized a press conference with the help of lawmaker Albert Ho Chun-yan of the Democratic Party, where Lam detailed how he had been kidnapped and detained in Ningbo, then Shaoguan, in mainland China. For further information, see "Full transcript of Lam Wing-kee's opening statement at his Hong Kong press conference," *South China Morning Post*, June 17, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/law-crime/article/1976598/full-transcript-lam-wing-kees-opening-statement-his-hong.

[255] *Global Times,* January 22, 2016.

[256] Some examples include:
"Guanmei hong *Shinian* guchui fankang" 官媒轟《十年》鼓吹反抗 [State media condemns *Ten Years* for encouraging resistance], *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, January 23, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20160123/19463853.
"*Huanshi* sheping pi *Shinian* wanquan huangdan, xuanyang juewang, sixiang bingdu" 環時社評批《十年》完全荒誕、宣揚絕望、思想病毒 [*Global Times* criticizes *Ten Years* to be 'absurd,' 'pessimistic,' and a 'virus of the mind'], *The Stand News* 立場新聞, January 22, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://thestandnews.com/politics/環時社評-批-十年-完全荒誕-宣揚絕望-思想病毒.

out of the result of the Best Picture Award in mainland China—induce chain reactions and attention in Hong Kong—for many times, bombardments and pressure fired from China actually brought more audience to the cinema, and drew local and overseas media attention to the film.[257] In other words, the two spectatorships not only represent voices, opinions, and interest groups with respective stances, but they can also be regarded as two expanding spheres with their wavelengths bouncing across the storied world in the film and the situated present occupied by the viewers and the commentators, where the two, to varying degrees, reflect, cast impacts on, and build up one another.

In the case of *Ten Years*, these two outspoken forms of spectatorship differentiate themselves from each other not only by a simple matter of taste or liking, but by their contrasting takes on the film, and somehow by their mutually exclusive stances towards the conceptions and perceptions of Hong Kong's local in representations and beyond. The two spectatorships of the film can therefore be regarded as responses as well as reactions to the presence of each other; however, the two spectatorships—as it has been mentioned earlier—do not represent all but two contrasting perks in a spectrum concerning the reception and the circulation of the film. Nevertheless, the media's takes on the film inform several attitudes shared among the spectators towards the film that correspond not only to this superficial binary split between the two spectatorships as a first impression, but also importantly the manifold voices that lie underneath. To begin with the obvious, pro-China media such as *Global Times*, *Ta Kung Pao* and *Wenweipo* demonstrate clearly a typical view of disapproval, where the sense of contempt embedded in their criticism recalls the mentioning of Hong Kong's local by the same party. On the contrary, the film is considered to be a "miracle" and a "success"[258] by other media according to its box

[257] Overseas media coverage of *Ten Years* and its contrasting reception in Hong Kong and China includes but is not limited to the following examples:
"'Ten Years': Dark vision of Hong Kong's future proves surprise box office hit," *CNN*, January 21, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2016/01/20/asia/hong-kong-ten-years-future/.
"Ten Years: Controversial Hong Kong film wins top Asia award," *BBC*, April 4, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35957185.
"China News Blackout as 'Ten Years' Takes Hong Kong Best Film Award," *New York Times*, April 4, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/05/world/asia/hong-kong-china-film-award-ten-years.html?_r=0.

[258] Kris Cheng, "'A miracle': Dystopian HK film *Ten Years* passes HK$5 million mark at the box office," *Hong Kong Free Press*, February 3, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/02/03/a-miracle-dystopian-hk-film-ten-years-passes-hk5-million-

office performance, the audience's support, and the professional recognition earned in film festival circuits and awards ceremonies—to this end, treating the film as a triumph and the valorization of what it represents precisely characterize the main features of the supportive spectatorship. Meanwhile, the contrasting interpretations of the film are also continuously mediated and reported by the media, local and overseas, thus recording the contacts and clashes between the two outspoken spectatorships, and simultaneously putting *Ten Years* under the media's spotlight for months while all these events were unfolded. During the processes of mediation and remediation, reportages as such like CNN's and BBC's, by tracing the underlying reasons to China's anger and explaining, contrarily, the overwhelming local support of the film, not only expose the different spectatorships at work in counteracting one another, but also invite the participation of different voices, ranging from the directors' to the audience, in giving light to the different 'Hong Kong' they project and (want to) identify within and beyond the film. Transgressing the split between support and its reverse, the vantage points where different readerships of localness are encouraged posit a positive space for different Hong Kong localnesses to be varyingly conceived and perceived. On the one hand, the contrasting conceptualizations and perceptions towards Hong Kong localness offered by the supportive and the unsupportive spectatorships, and beyond, expose the pre-existing forces in the city that have possibly shaped the respective ways of interpretations and catalysed the emergence of different spectatorships; on the other hand, their appearances and their subsequent prorogation, in return, reinforce the respective forces at work, where voices representing their stances are, to different degrees, circulated and amplified.

The Making of Postmillennial Localnesses

Arriving at this point, the question raised in the beginning of this chapter is revisited. "Local" as it is discussed in the naming of the "local egg" oscillates between the descriptive use of the term as an adjective (as straightforward as it is to describe eggs that are raised in Hong Kong, or language that is used in Hong Kong) and the cultural

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mark-at-the-box-office/.

Phila Siu, "Hong Kong directors defend success of *Ten Years*," *South China Morning Pos*t, April 5, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1933635/hong-kong-directors-defend-success-ten-years.

connotations and values bestowed to what the term describes (the fabrication of local identity; the significance of local culture). With reference to local as a travelling concept which has been extensively discussed in Chapter 2, comprehending "local" as localized connection formed between things, places, and bodies that are located in a territory concerned (Hong Kong in this case) are, to a certain extent, geographical facts that are indisputable (like the case of Sung Wong Toi). In this regard, the controversies over local in postmillennial Hong Kong are indeed based on the various cultural, political and social inscriptions that are imposed on local, where localness, as a manifestation of local, is conceived and perceived very differently by different individuals and parties according to the readership they belong to (like the case of Lion Rock). The awareness of the presence of localnesses and the multi-perspectival way of reading local hereby pose a meta-commentary to *Ten Years*: Not only that the film narrative provides an alternative story of Hong Kong that enables us to explore (see above) how Hong Kong localnesses are conceived and perceived in post-1997 Hong Kong across different planes of abstraction and materialization, representation, and mediation; but the film itself as a whole is also a constellation of Hong Kong localness that invites different readings.

On the level of production, the film is categorized and marketed as a local production speaking to the local audience with a focus on pressing social and political issues in Hong Kong. This "local" label is thereby a factual description that concerns the nature of the film production. On the level of circulation and reception, the "local" label is also proven and accepted, as the popularity of the film is reflected in its box office performance, its full house frequency, the voluntary organization of community screenings, and the high participation rate of these activities. In all these instances, the film-viewing act is turned into a performance of Hong Kong local identity in the postmillennial era, where supporters carry out physical actions, undergo interactions with different things, places, and bodies in the city, and produce perceivable effects by consolidating the particular localness they advocate for and the local identity they find togetherness in. On the level of the film content, the portrayal of different things, places, and bodies in the film that is aimed to represent Hong Kong demonstrates the making of a Hong Kong localness. Through the agency of different bodies, the film presents various Hong Kong personae: as a taxi driver and an office lady who cannot

speak Mandarin in "Dialect"; as the young and the old generations who strive for democracy and defend against the infringement of rights and freedom in "Self-Immolator"; as a grocery store owner who is a keen supporter of local products, a farmer who carries out local farming amidst difficulties, a comic bookstore owner who circulates banned items underground (which include the children-friendly Japanese comic *Doraemon*), and a young boy who acts as an undercover agent in the Youth Guards by sending warnings to the comic bookstore owner in "Local Egg." Extremely symbolical, a Hong Kong person, under threats of extinction, is preserved as a specimen in "Season of the End." In addition to these bodies-in-motion, things and places also play important roles in conceiving the 'Hong Kong' presented in the film—these include but are not limited to eggs that are grown in Hong Kong ("Local Egg"), Cantonese speakers and Cantonese as a language ("Dialect"), protests and the act of self-immolation ("Self-Immolator"), debris of demolished buildings and mundane everyday life objects ("Season of the End"), and familiar places located in Hong Kong with recognisable architecture style (for instance, the school in "Extra"; the typical Hong Kong-style "*dai pai dong*" (open-air food stall) in "Dialect"; the British Embassy and a college campus in "Self-Immolator"; the wet market and the public housing estate in "Local Egg").

On the level of perception, all these things, places, and bodies with their physical presence in the everyday reality, when mediated by the camera and the film-viewing process, constellate a particular 'Hong Kong' on the filmic dimension. Meanwhile, this 'Hong Kong' in an imaginary future of 2025 speaks to another 'Hong Kong' that the filmmaker and the audience experience in the situated reality of 2015. To complicate this, it is in this situated present where the previously prevailing 'Hong Kong' that is perceived through local values (freedom of speech and expression), local language (Cantonese), local culture, and identity is found to be at stake. To this end, the 'Hong Kong' projected by the film encompasses varying 'Hong Kongs'—at times overlapped, and at times confrontational—in these interpretive spaces, where residual colonial forces of the past, and the emergent neo-colonizing power in the present are simultaneously at work in propelling and expelling different 'Hong Kongs' in motion. Among these constructions, a particular localness is conveyed in the film through the artists' intents on highlighting an unfamiliar look at a 'Hong

Kong' that is ridded of its local characteristics. In this regard, differentiating Hong Kong from China is indeed a building block of postmillennial Hong Kong localness. Moreover, how this 'Hong Kong' is understood, and whether the particular kind of Hong Kong localness rendered in the film is accepted or not is highly dependent on the perceivers. In extreme cases the same elements are not at all read as a solicitation of Hong Kong localness: The unsupportive spectatorship has, for instance, demonstrated the overt rejection of anything and any values that are connected to Hong Kong's local. Between the two extreme poles, the same entity, even when they are read in connection to Hong Kong's local, does not always transmit the same set of meanings. In other words, different versions of 'Hong Kong' are mediated by one another where differentiation takes place simultaneouly among them. The 'Hong Kong' conceived by the unsupportive spectatorship is, after all, different from the 'Hong Kong' envisioned by the supporters of the film. This explains how the idea of Hong Kong localness is on the one hand comdemned, and on the other hand, valorized.

Conclusion:
The Appearance of the Dis-appearance

Hong Kong culture in face of 1997 is famously described by Ackbar Abbas as "a space of disappearance" where the then-future of the city was largely deemed uncertain and unknown. Abbas's notion of "disappearance" does not mean "nonappearance, absence or lack of presence," but are interpreted by Abbas as misrecognition, replacement and substitution, and problematized visual representation (e.g. abstraction) at large.[259] Abbas uses this concept of "dis-appearance" to address the in-between condition of Hong Kong—where things, places, bodies, their representations, and the sentiments attached to them are ephemeral, misplaced, misrecognized and, in many instances, they are not seen and treated properly, despite their actual presence in the urban space as well as in cultural production. Emphasizing on the component of the visual, Abbas also names this distorted way of seeing as "reverse hallucination" (i.e. not seeing what is there).[260] To this end, disappearance

[259] Abbas, *Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance*, 7.
[260] Ibid., 8-9.

itself, to a certain extent, is also problematized by the phenomenon of what Abbas observes as cultural disappearance and hence rendered as something which is not there in the impending arrival of 1997. From 1997 and onward, the attempts to erase Hong Kong local characteristics actually extends Abbas's notion of "disappearance" (not seeing what is there) to an actual form of disappearance (what was there is no longer there). It is, therefore, important to distinguish the two levels of disappearance involved and the varying responses produced. Disappearance before 1997, according to Abbas, is caused by the blurry, or blindfolded vision which denies the appearance of certain entities, sentiments, and representations, despite their actual presence; what I observe after 1997 is, on the contrary, the conspicuous, visible dis-appearance of what used to be there in the city, and what used to acquire volume in cultural representations.

Consider *Ten Years*, the feeling of unfamiliarity, provoked by the depiction of an uncanny, estranged Hong Kong, indeed embodies an awareness towards the changing landscape in cultural representations as well as in everyday life Hong Kong. From the destruction of places, things, and bodies to the dissolution of hope and optimistic outlook towards the city's future, disappearance is an important and irreducible motif of the film. Moreover, the two spectatorships provide an extratextual dimension where different then-blurry, now-visible forces, which differ from their conceptualizations and perceptions of localness, are seen to collide with one another. Their collision, on the one hand, reveals the local subjectivity of the local population manifested in their angsts to the future and responses to the current socio-political landscape of the city; on the other hand, the clashes and contacts of these forces—visible to many—indicate their concrete presence and impacts in the situated reality, despite their apparent intangible nature. *Ten Years* is therefore an example where cultural representation and its circulation reveal a manifestation of Hong Kong localness upon different degrees of interpretation and remediation in the post-1997, post-Umbrella Movement era. As a result, disappearance as real, explicit happenings (demolition of old districts; infringement of freedom of speech and expression via self-censorship and the internalization of political correctness etc.) is indeed witnessed through visible events on the filmic level, on the level of circulation where the spectatorships operate, and in real-life scenarios where references are made from

and the spectators are situated in. To this end, we are indeed moving away from Abbas's notion of "dis-appearance" as "not seeing what is there," but to the appearance of "disappearance" where disappearance and its mediated forms are directly witnessed by the naked eyes of Hong Kong people in everyday life and through cultural production and consumption.[261]

All in all, the analysis in this chapter has shown how disappearance resurfaces in the medium of cultural representation as an alternative form of appearance. To connect this to the discussion in previous chapters, the postmillennial rise of local consciousness, which is incubated in social activism and political consciousness, is indeed closely connected to an awareness of disappearance which brings different voices, positionings, and stances to appear, and their confrontations to surface in post-handover (and post-hangover) Hong Kong. In cultural expressions like *Ten Years*, disappearance as an exaggerated form of appearance can at times engender a force of resistance, as it is conveyed at the end of the film: The tagline "too late" fades away to become "never too late" before the ending credits are scrolled. While optimism and pessimism can be two sides of the same coin, what it is shown here reminds us of the call for new perspectives and solutions in the academia in telling and renewing Hong Kong story (see Chapter 1). However, to admit the inconvenient truth, the appearance of disappearance also means disappearance is actually taking place in the city, and this is definitely an alarming situation if cultural expression of localness can only appear through the negative space of actual disappearances.

In a nutshell, demonstrated in this chapter is how Hong Kong localnesses are conceived and perceived in representations and the circulation of these representations. With the film *Ten Years* as a crossing point, the operation of different spectatorships and readerships reveals different unequal forces at work in telling, and at the same time, undoing different Hong Kong stories that are told by each other. By making visible the intersection of these forces and the effects of their encounters, the

[261] To complicate the politics of appearance and disappearance, Chu Yiu-wai highlights another alternative, if not peculiar, form of appearance in the examination of "SAR New Wave Cinema" in post-2003 Hong Kong, which is to "present the unpresentable" (an expression Chu borrows from Lyotard), where Chu's "unrepresentable" here refers to what "cannot be presented (or represented) in the existing co-production model" under the censorship scheme of China. Mediating this alternative form of appearance is indeed disappearance and a struggle to reappear but in alternate forms.
Yiu-wai Chu, "Toward a New Hong Kong Cinema: beyond Mainland–Hong Kong co-productions," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 9 2 (2015): 113-114, DOI: 10.1080/17508061.2014.994352.

analysis revealed the unequal distribution of power and, consequently, the unequal treatment of voices, which are manifested in representations, and are mediated in their circulation and interpretation. When the linkage between ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘local’ is, at times, made dis-appeared, and at other times, appeared in the post-1997, post-Umbrella Movement era of Hong Kong, the multiple voices that are unevenly sounded and heard in the society unfold the countless attempts in reordering and renewing the connotations and the values bestowed to ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘local’ differently on the cultural, social, and political realms. The varying constellations of ‘Hong Kong’ and ‘local’ achieved through different things, places, and bodies thereby encompass an endless process of deconstruction and reconstruction, where conceiving and perceiving a Hong Kong story under consensus is totally impossible due to the irreconcilable differences between all these contrasting forces and voices involved. After all, the connections between local things, places, and bodies, whether they are named or not, are potentially abundant, but whether they can be seen depends on the different connectivities struck towards local relations, where this is relative to how this ‘local’ is understood.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion:
Postcolonial Local Relations with Things, Places, and Bodies

"Gradually there are more specimens than objects remaining in the city"—this is how Hong Kong in the year 2025 is envisioned in Wong Fei-pang's "Season of the End" which makes up the second vignette of the five-part film *Ten Years*. To archive the debris of everyday life in the city, the two protagonists devote themselves to collecting and preserving things *left* in the bulldozed zones, ranging from a ladle, broken plate, election campaign photo, membership card, washing powder, hand gloves, to cigarette ashes. After all, specimens and objects are both things; however, they differ from one another in this context on the different connectivities they share with the two protagonists. In the process of curating, classifying, and preserving, mechanical acts such as sampling and labelling reflect the bodily relation the two protagonists form with individual things, however trivial and mundane, that have seemingly lost their original functions and monetary values in the city, and hence become the specimens they handle. Now lying in ruins and constituting part of the ruins, these things, deserted by their previous human owners on voluntary or involuntary basis, are decontextualized from the market economy, which guides the conventional understanding and treatment of things in the human society; at the moment they are archived, these things become acknowledged as things that exist on their own and that impose, or have once imposed, their agencies on their human counterparts. On the one hand, the relationship between humans and non-humans is rekindled by transgressing the conventional realm where things are interpreted through the frameworks of fetishism, utility, and monetary values. On the other hand, the aspiration of creating an archive, even probably without any opportunity to exhibit the collection, can be interpreted as an act of resistance against the (forced) amnesia towards one's experience, culture, identity, language, and dwelling place—as one of the protagonists explicates in the film, "taxidermy is for what is disappearing and dying."

The (anti-)climax of the short film comes with an unexpected request made by one of the curators, when he reveals to his partner that he would like to be turned into a specimen and be archived. With the opposition of his partner and the insistence of

the man, the camera follows the surreal procedures partaken to preserve a 'human-being,' from collecting body parts such as nails and hair, to the person himself taking in special chemical solutions when alive. With the motif of their gesture of archiving revealed, the highly disturbing, yet symbolic acts can be understood as a response to the threat posed not exactly to one's life, but to one's identity and livelihood where one adheres to socially, culturally, and psychologically. The protagonist's own wish to be preserved thereby reveals the monumental importance of the latter over the former. As it is laterally exposed in the film, one's local living environment is reciprocally shaped by the language, the culture, and the social relations that are derived from it, and the physical and the mental attachment formed among all these entities and agencies involved.

In addition to this, the idea of forgoing one's life in order to retain the corporeality of one's body invites a reconfiguration of the understanding of the body: Not only does the body transgress the dimension of mortality, but the materiality, and the thing-like, nonhuman quality of the body itself are also revealed, if not amplified. Moreover, what is preserved, or what is aimed to be preserved, after all, is not just the corporeal body that is now transfixed in a state when the act of preservation takes place; but the wish to substantiate one's identity, culture, and language in the process actually exposes the agency of the body in embodying and emitting different social and cultural relations, whether the aforementioned goal can be fulfilled or not in the end. With an eye to the spatial distance cast between the two protagonists, and the ultramodern city that they look at from afar when dwelling in ruins, the experience of uprootedness and estrangement entails the lack of connection between the two protagonists and a city that they do not belong to. In other words, the plight results from the removal of what is considered local, and hence the disappearance of local relations. Following the main title, the line "xiachong bu keyi yubing" (夏蟲不可以語冰; literally "an insect that only lives for a summer cannot be expected to know what ice is") is displayed on screen. As an expression from the teachings of the ancient Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi 莊子 which is documented in "Waipian: Qiushui" 外篇秋水 (Outer Chapters: The Floods of Autumn), the contemplative line

opens up the metaphorical dimension of the short film.[262] Echoing to what is shown in the short film, the short lifespan of the insect thereby conveys a sense of transience, and the impending arrival of an end. In this regard, the cryptic yet tragic preservation of a Hong Kong persona, who has now seemingly become a past tense and even an erasure, also raises questions on the act of preservation itself: By fixating an object to preserve to a suspended time-space, can taxidermy really prevent things from extinction? Or does it rather stand witness to their disappearance, which is deemed inevitable?

A Summa

Exemplified by the figurative images brought about by the symbolic bilingual titles "Season of the End" in English and "Winter Cicada" in Chinese, the above reading of the short film is an epitome of what has been argued and discussed in previous chapters: The agencies of things, places, and bodies are acknowledged in facilitating the movements of culture and cultural objects, where an elastic understanding of materiality is put forward. As circulation continues to take place, remediation and intermediation dissolve the boundaries across media, texts and beyond, and destabilize the rigid partitioning of representation and interpretation. In view of this, reciprocity remains as an important key to explore the fluid interactions between conception and perception, cultural representation and social reality, such that varying degrees of connectivity between different things, places, bodies, and Hong Kong's local can be found in a rhizomatic network that is studded with different interobjective, intersubjective, intertextual, and intermedial relations. By pivoting various analyses against selected things, places, and bodies (Kowloon King and his calligraphy in Chapter 2; Sung Wong Toi in Chapter 3; Lion Rock in Chapter 4; the spectatorships of *Ten Years* in Chapter 5), different constellations of Hong Kong's local came to surface. As a foresight to this, the concept of "localnesses" was proposed in Chapter 2, with an aim to expose the difficulties, if not impossibilities, in pinning down any rigid connotation of local in the changing socio-political landscape of Hong Kong in the past as well as the present, and the problematic consequences in

[262] Zhuangzi 莊子, "Waipian: Qiushui" 外篇秋水 (Outer Chapters: The Floods of Autumn), accessed October 10, 2016, http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=20121.

doing so. Meanwhile, the injection of a plural form to the term is also a constant reminder of the openness to be pertained in the signification process, and the irregularity of its meanings when the term travels across different contexts and realms. In view of the abundance of terms available and the lack of a consensus in their usage and connotation, "localness" is, for instance, regarded in this thesis as a manifestation of the abstract "local" at large, where "localism" is considered as the enactment of "local" through political means specifically. With this terminology at work, the intent behind the choice of words is, to a certain extent, clarified; what lies underneath "local" *per se*, however, remains ambiguous on the surface. This thesis, nevertheless, refuses to pin down what "local" is and is not. With regard to the concept of "localnesses," all the aforementioned "locals" can as well be different from one another, depending on how the term is conceived and perceived, and the contexts it rests on. While the rise of local consciousness over the course of Hong Kong's history pertains a collective dimension, how local is understood indeed constitutes a more personal level, and hence engenders a more complex network. The emergence of different localisms in postmillennial Hong Kong is an eloquent example to this, where local is polemically manifested on one end of the spectrum as a willingness to integrate the other into the self (as long as the self is acknowledged and preserved), and a complete rejection of the Other (usually manifested as hostility towards China) on the other end. Scattered in between are a myriad of different understandings and manifestations of different "locals," where the cultural, social, and political realms come in contact with one another, amidst the unsettling nature of the concept as it travels from one level to another. This, in return, spells out the significance of this thesis in exploring specific things, places, bodies, and their relations to local, such that uncovered in localized relations (e.g. Sung Wong Toi, the émigré-literati, among others in colonial Hong Kong by the turn of the 20th century), and local relations (e.g. Lion Rock, different generations of Hong Kong people, and the attempts of different groups in claiming their own Lion Rock spirit) not only constitutes different constellations of Hong Kong localnesses, but also different cultural, social, and political forces at work which give light to the highly contested and complicated 'post'-colonial scenarios of Hong Kong following the 1997 handover, and the subsequent hangover state of the city. Last but not least in Chapter 5, the two

spectatorships of *Ten Years* demonstrate how countless readerships of local become visible in postmillennial Hong Kong, where they constantly overlap, superimpose, and counteract with one another to produce unequal forces that shape different 'locals' across different spheres, and reveal the different tones and amplitudes of voices in response to different representations and interpretations of "local."

Having connected all these nodal points produced in previous chapters, I seek to reflect on the varying positionings of Hong Kong's local—in the form of physical connections, cultural manifestations, social relations, and political connotations—in this concluding chapter.

Translocal, Transnational, and Local

Previously in Chapter 3, I presented a peculiar case concerning Sung Wong Toi and its connection with the émigré-literati who moved to colonial Hong Kong from mainland China in the late 19th century and the early 20th century. By juxtaposing Sung Wong Toi with the fall of the Song dynasty, and the then more recent happenings in the Qing dynasty, these émigré-literati, to a certain extent, made attempts to deterritorialize the rock from its physical location in Hong Kong. With its presence in the territory before the arrival of mankind and any record of human history, Sung Wong Toi can, on the contrary, be easily inscribed with a territorializing power, as it readily possesses a geographically defined localness; however, the idea of local was never hinted at in the works of these émigré-literati, be it on the geographical, cultural, or political level. Instead, the rock was displaced from its geographical context, where the politico-geographical border of colonial Hong Kong was transgressed to give way for personal nostalgia, and historical imagination of imperial China to take place. Although, local, in its most literal sense, found its expression in Ho Kai's speech delivered in the Legislative Council in 1898, this geographical local posited is merely a physical and largely straightforward attachment to things and places that exist in the natural landscape. In this context where Ho lobbied for the preservation of Sung Wong Toi as a local monument, the rather unreflective use of local is not charged with any specific sense of belonging, where a certain political boundary assigned to a place, or the sovereignty designated to a territory could have, otherwise, been embraced. After all, the colonial and even later

on the 'post'-colonial status of Hong Kong indeed makes it never easy to understand the trajectory of local belonging in the city. To this end, Ho's application of local is as paradoxical as it is in the reverse case of the émigré-literati: Even though the activities of the émigré-literati were carried out by positing connections with the rock and the local territory circumscribed by the presence of the rock, these localized attachments towards Sung Wong Toi were performed but not said on the conscious level. In other words, the paradox is dually constituted by the attraction towards a local thing and a local place that are not named local, and the connection made to something that lies out of the local context through something local. This thereby urges us to look at what it means to be translocal, or transnational in this particular context, and beyond.

Ien Ang in the book *On Not Speaking Chinese* brings in what she calls the "translocal context" to explain how local is composed by the physical movement of immigrants, and the subsequent contacts and clashes with foreign cultures and places. The translocal is a result of Ang's careful and deliberate displacement of the conventional opposition between the local and the global—to Ang, it is by exposing disconnections in the translocal context that the local is formed.[263] Theoretically speaking, if there is no boundary restraining the local, it can be forever expanded to cover even the global. However, the world in reality is organized and understood through political borders and geographical boundaries, where the local cannot be escaped from being contained and represented in one way or another. While Ang urges her readers to think critically beyond the local/global dichotomy, but without detaching from the practical fact of the existing world order, the local, according to Ang, is produced by "non-local, translocal, global forces," and local identity is "always-already a crossroads."[264] Meanwhile, the fluid movement of the local is also observed by Lo Kwai-cheung. By probing into Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s, he contends that Hong Kong's local is neither a "primary source of national identity against the penetrating forces of multinational capitalism and cultural imperialism," nor a "site of resistance" to "Western modernization."[265] Similar to Ang, the local

[263] Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West* (London: Routledge, 2001), 176.
[264] Ibid., 173.
[265] Kwai-cheung Lo, "Transnationalization of the Local in Hong Kong Cinema of the 1990s," *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World*, ed. Esther C. M. Yau (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 261.

identified by Lo is never an opposition to the global, nor is it a celebration of the national:

> What the "local" implies in this context [Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s] is no longer a realm of resistance to global capital, nor is it a form of desire to return to one's cultural origins or to a lost past. Rather, the "local" constructed in Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s is an area of negotiation within which dominant, subordinate, and oppositional cultural, economic, and ideological elements are mixed, in various permutations.[266]

Differing from Ang, Lo, however, puts forward that the local of Hong Kong is constituted in the transnational. To this end, Lo's choice of the transnational is potentially connected to the particular context he examines, which is Hong Kong cinema of the 1990s—as Lo recounts in the very beginning of the article the keen connection and the proximity between Hong Kong cinema and Taiwan in terms of creativity, capital flow, and market tastes, among others, the turn to the transnational is thereby justified in this case.

Whether it concerns the translocal or the transnational, both Ang's and Lo's discussions are pivoted on the local and the emphasis on its potential movement, which is further embodied in the use of the prefix "trans-" in the terminology chosen. Although both terms posit the local out of a physically localized context, the choice of translocal and that of transnational remain different from one another. Concerning the translocal context, Ang firmly contends that any "process of translocal connecting" can only be "partial."[267] In other words, the local is transmittable, but not always translatable in every context due to its specificity. On the contrary, what Lo puts forward as the "transnationalization of the local" entrusts the comprehension of the local by others, since the conception of the local is produced partly through transnationalizing forces—in the context of Hong Kong cinema, the popularity of the kungfu genre, according to Lo's own analysis and the arguments he collects from

[266] Ibid., 262-263.
[267] Ang, 176.

other scholars, is a result of the strategic projection of the transnational audience's expectation into a tailor-made Hong Kong's "local."[268] In a nutshell, Ang believes that local is "distinctively constituted" even in a translocal context, whereas Lo posits the highly mutable local in Hong Kong cinema as something inseparable from the "transnational modes of living and imagining."[269] Despite their different opinions, reflected in the two studies is the case-sensitive operation of the concept "local," where a specific context is always required in an analysis. To this end, the targets for analysis in previous chapters precisely offer a lens to look at the different facets and trajectories of Hong Kong's local, namely Kowloon King and localnesses in Chapter 2, Sung Wong Toi and localized relations in Chapter 3, Lion Rock and the integration of Hong Kong and local in Chapter 4, and the spectatorships of *Ten Years* and different readerships of Hong Kong localness(es) in Chapter 5. In all these different operations of the local, Ang's and Lo's respective conceptions of "translocal" and "transnational" are at times applicable, and at times not. For instance, the international circulation of Kowloon King's calligraphy, from exhibitions to auctions, is not only carried out through the flow of capital and the transmission of appreciation, but is also embedded in Kowloon King's transformation from a nuisance to a local icon that is accepted by the local population and beyond—the transnationalization of the local is thereby revealed when Kowloon King earns his fame through the "touristic" gaze on both local and international levels; whereas in the cinematic world constructed by *Ten Years*, the intentional effacement of what is understood 'without saying' as Hong Kong's local and the resonances created in the film that call forth the actual experiences of living, or having lived, in Hong Kong pertain a certain untranslatable dimension that Ang speaks of—for instance, the angst induced by the film towards the dystopian future of the city can be described in translocal contexts (such as the overseas media's attention and their reports on the film), but can in this way only be actually felt by people who are immediately connected to the city (such as those who organized and supported the public screenings).

Starting with the transnational and ending with the translocal, I, however, do not want to suggest an over-simplistic binary reading (e.g. a unidirectional trajectory)

[268] Lo, 264.
[269] Ang, 176; Lo, 275.

to this alignment. Instead, I would rather emphasize on the complexity and the irregularity involved, for instance, in the different imagination of the local and the national which transgress any form of overgeneralized categorization that might, otherwise, be made through simple association. Considering the émigré-literati community that maintained a close affinity with Sung Wong Toi, the idea of the nation actually speaks very differently to different individuals in the group, since they, even by 'settling' in colonial Hong Kong, positioned themselves varyingly as Qing remnants, loyalists, and revolutionists, among others. What Law puts forward as "collaborative colonial power"—as a building block of British colonialism in Hong Kong—precisely demonstrates the unsettledness and the nonconformity embedded in the national discourses that are introduced to and imposed on Hong Kong against the changing socio-political contexts. In all these instances, the image of the nation does not take form within the territory of Hong Kong, but it is (encouraged to be) imagined outside Hong Kong mostly as either the British Empire during the colonial era, or the People's Republic of China that claims Hong Kong's sovereignty after 1997. Similar to what Ang and Lo both suggest, local in Hong Kong is never a source of nationalistic sentiments in view of the changing sovereignty holders of the city. On the contrary, Hong Kong's local, in many of these instances, provides a third space to these two choices of (and as) nations—Kowloon King who saw himself the rightful owner of his land accepted neither the British Hong Kong government nor the Hong Kong SAR government in administering Hong Kong; Sung Wong Toi embodies countless projections which do not settle on a unifying national imagery, not to say identity; the television series *Below the Lion Rock*, when released in the 1970s, defied the British Hong Kong government's plan for propagandist purpose; and when the "new Lion Rock spirit" was called forth among the supporters of the Umbrella Movement in 2014, the embedded notion of self-determination and concern towards local affairs are responses to the overarching influence of China, and are resolutions to the issues that were left unsolved by the colonial government before 1997 (e.g. the implementation of universal suffrage). To this end, there is actually the grounding of the local in a local context, which does not infringe the fluid mobility of local in the rhizomatic network of relations involved.

The Local and The National Revisited

The convergence of Hong Kong and local, as it is demonstrated in the cultural reverberations of Lion Rock and their cultural movements before 1997 is faced with the gradual divergence of the two in the post-1997 context. The various spectatorships of *Ten Years* also differ on what they consider as 'local,' or 'Hong Kong,' and what not. On the socio-political level, the political campaigns organized for the 2015 Legislative Council General Election, which has been discussed in Chapter 2, also expose the manifold, yet contradicting claims on 'Hong Kong' and 'local'—candidates with a localist orientation, albeit their internal differences, posited their different aspirations of Hong Kong through rebuilding and reinforcing local relations; whereas pro-establishment, pro-Beijing candidates tended to speak of 'Hong Kong' but by placing 'local' under erasure. In one exemplar, the campaign slogan "win back Hong Kong" was employed by Regina Ip, the former Secretary for Security of the SAR government and now the chairperson of the New People's Party. The emphasis on the word "back" implies the action to take back what has been lost, or opposed. This intent is contrasted in terms of its implication, and, nonetheless, shared similarities in terms of its literal, decontextualized meanings with the slogan "let's fix Hong Kong," which is used by the pro-democratic candidate Paul Zimmerman. With their oppositional political orientations, their understanding of what to mend and what to take back certainly do not coincide with one another. The tug of war between the use of these terms not only inserts contrasting and even contradictory cultural and political connotations into previously neutral terms and subsequently problematizes discussion on all levels; but 'Hong Kong' itself also becomes a site of contestation, where 'Hong Kong' is revealed to be imagined, interpreted, and even practised differently as a concept, as a place, as a value, as a historical juncture, and so on.[270] How "Hong Kong" and "local" are connected and represented indeed involve different attempts to territorialize, deterritorialize and reterritorialize in postmillennial

[270] A similar perspective is also eloquently described by Shin as the question on "how the *idea* of Hong Kong and a notion of a 'people' have evolved" (144). In addition to this, what I sought to explore in this thesis are the connections between particular things, places, bodies, and different 'Hong Kongs' conceived, which can be perceived as different constellations of the territory, society, community, and the self across different times and through spaces.
Leo K. Shin, "The 'National Question': The Stories of Hong Kong," in *Hong Kong Culture and Society in the New Millennium: Hong Kong as Method*, ed. Yiu-wai Chu (Singapore: Springer, 2017), 129-148.

Hong Kong.

Meanwhile, how the nation is understood further complicates the situation. In 2012, the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR Government attempted to implement "moral and national education" as a compulsory subject in secondary and primary schools in Hong Kong—the "national" in this case is, in no doubt, China, and to be specific, the political regime of China.[271] In the teaching handbook entitled "The China Model" endorsed by the government, the ruling party of China is described to be "progressive, selfless, and united" (進步、無私與團結), and the multi-party political system is criticized to be a cause for economic loss and other adverse effects in society; whereas modern Chinese history is smoothened by omitting events such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.[272] The plan of the government and the release of this 32-page booklet stirred up waves of terror, anger, and anxiety in the population among students, teachers, parents, and the public, due to the controversial materials that are studded with the state ideology upheld by the Communist Party of the People's Republic of China. The city-wide anti-national education campaign starts with the formation and the coalition of different pressure groups (including the student-activist-group Scholarism); people from all walks of life demonstrate their opposition against the government's plan, which is criticized to be brainwashing, through protests, sit-ins, hunger strike, and an open concert that were organized and supported by many—finally, after a 10-day siege of the government headquarters took place in September 2012, where the organizers at one time recorded a participation of over 100,000 protesters, the government lifted their plan.[273] The campaign, showing traits of the emergence of a civil society, is one of the most notable exemplars of community-based social activism in postmillennial Hong Kong. Moreover, in this context of discussion, the campaign reveals the refusal to take part in the national discourse written and imposed by the ruling party of China.

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[271] According to the Secretary for Education Michael Suen, the aim of national education is to "help students gain a comprehensive understanding of the motherland from different perspectives."
See, "LCQ20: National Education," Press Release, Hong Kong's News Service Department of the HKSAR Government, http://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/201107/13/P201107130128.htm.

[272] See, the statement of Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union, July 6, 2012, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.hkptu.org/7010.

[273] "Protest against national education to end after government climbdown," *South China Morning Post*, September 9, 2012, accessed October 10, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1032535/protest-against-national-education-end-after-government-climbdown.

While one cannot dismiss that this national discourse is, nonetheless, welcomed by a proportion of the population (the pro-Establishment, pro-Beijing camp in the political sphere and their supporters as one obvious example), the national is, otherwise, imagined very differently in Hong Kong. In *Yuzao de Chengbang: Xianggang Minzu Yuanliushi* 鬱躁的城邦：香港民族源流史 (A National History of Hong Kong), Tsui Sing-yan presents a historical investigation of the early population that made up Hong Kong in the 19th Century.[274] The term "national" in its English title corresponds to the term *minzu* 民族 in the Chinese title, and the pair constitutes a reciprocal relation in mediation and remediation, which reveal how the two concepts are understood on the microscopic level of the book, and are connected to the postmillennial staging of Hong Kong on the macroscopic dimension where the early history of Hong Kong is reimagined. With regards to this choice of word, I observe at least two factors that attribute to the difficulty in discerning an accurate translation of the term and the transmission of its meaning: First, *minzu* pertains another connotation, namely ethnicity, in the Chinese language;[275] second, there exists more than one forms of nationalism, as Michel Seymour has grounded his discussion of nationalism respectively on the territorial-civic level, and the genealogical-ethnic level.[276] While the aim of Tsui's book is declared in its Chinese title (i.e. to trace the genealogy of Hong Kong *minzu*), Tsui never asserts a nativist reading of the "local" in the early population, which can be, otherwise, fulfilled by studying the so-called indigenous tribes or clans who inhabited Hong Kong before the colonial era. Instead, Tsui emphasizes the fluid movement undertaken by people and different groups that would later become part of the early population of Hong Kong. With an eye to the geographical positioning of Hong Kong, the coastal characteristic of the South China Sea and its connection to Hong Kong, according to Tsui, give rise to a flexible yet substantial form of community that is developed in and around Hong Kong. If *minzu* is to be the national that is connected to the oft-mentioned *Zhongyuan* 中原 (central

[274] Sing-yan Tsui 徐承恩, *Yuzao de Chengbang: Xianggang Minzu Yuanliushi* 鬱躁的城邦：香港民族源流史 [A National History of Hong Kong] (Hong Kong: Red Publishing, 2015).

[275] Woteng Li 黎蝸藤, "Yetan minzu yu guozu" 也談民族與國族 [On Minzu and Guozu], *Mingpao Daily* 明報, May 7, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://news.mingpao.com/ins/instantnews/web_tc/article/20160507/s00022/1462583417118.

[276] Michel Seymour, *Rethinking Nationalism* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1998), 227.

plain) civilization of China, Tsui's model destabilizes this way of reading by arguing that Hong Kong actually belongs to the *Lingnan* 嶺南 region, where the *Lingnan* culture inherited by Hong Kong and its neighbouring areas possesses intrinsic difference from the *Zhongyuan* culture. Meanwhile, *minzu* cannot be taken too simplistically as ethnicity alone (at least not in the singular form of the term), as Tsui maps out the hybrid and fluid constituency of Hong Kong early population from different coastal clans ("boat people"). To this end, rendering the nation as a genealogical-ethnic concept does not sound either, owing to the diversity of ethnicity and cultures pertained in the population. With an eye to all these, the "Hong Kong *minzu*" that Tsui seeks to investigate indeed put the conceptions and the perceptions of "Hong Kong" and "*minzu*" into mediation and negotiation in a retrospective mode cast from the perspective of the 21st century. If *minzu* is to denote the national as it is suggested in the official English title of Tsui's book, it sides more with an attachment of a certain territory, where these boat people, after years of floating, finally arrived on land, which is, nonetheless, a 'barren island.' Due to the lack of their personal accounts in the history of Hong Kong, their attachment to the physical Hong Kong and their identification with the name "Hong Kong" can hardly be measured, other than the livelihood they once led in the territory. In this regard, "Hong Kong *minzu*," whether it connotes Hong Kong to ethnicity (which is comprised of many different ethnicities) or to the national, is a positioning revisited and mediated by Tsui, in an attempt to decenter the conventional Han-centric and China-centric national discourse that is very much in use in the situated reality Tsui faces.

Likewise, the notion of "Hong Kong as *minzu*," where the meaning of *minzu* remains ambiguous, is also picked up in 2014 by *Undergrad*, a Chinese-language student publication edited and distributed by the student union of the University of Hong Kong.[277] *Minzu* is used to imagine a Hong Kong subjectivity through the city's "self determination" for its future, as response to the political deadlock in Hong Kong in face of the dominant hegemonic power possessed by the Establishment and Beijing. The urge to develop a new way of seeing Hong Kong is reiterated and

[277] Due to its unsettling use and connotations, the term "*minzu*" is left untranslated on purpose. "Xianggang minzu, mingyun zijue" 香港民族, 命運自決 [Hong Kong *Minzu*, Self-Determine the Future], *Undergrad* 學苑, February 2014, accessed October 10, 2016, https://issuu.com/hkusu_undergrad13/docs/book4_2336__1_.

expanded in a follow-up book volume *Xianggang Minzu Lun* 香港民族論 (On the Hong Kong National), with essays contributed by scholars and critics like Hung Ho-Fung, Tsui Sing-yan, Joseph Lian, and others. Similar to Tsui's historical investigation but differing in terms of the scope of study, articles in the book do not conceptualize Hong Kong in a nativist sense, but call for the empowerment of "Hong Kong" through new perspectives, and new political measures that can bring the marginalized Hong Kong to the centre of the picture. Despite this—unprecedented in any government policy address since the practice was introduced in 1972—Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying openly mentioned and criticized the two publications and their "adverse impacts" on Hong Kong.[278] Despite the fact that it is not discussed in any articles in the book, pro-Beijing voices insist on the pro-independence stance of the book, by accusing the mentioning of "Hong Kong *minzu*" in the book title as something 'politically incorrect.'[279] Similar to the unsupportive spectatorship of *Ten Years* examined in Chapter 5, these accusations and misreadings of the book result in a rise of attention and an increase of the sales of the book.[280] This discussion thereby reveals that how "*minzu*," "ethnicity," and "nation" are conceived and perceived recall the indeterminate and unsettling meanings of "local" that has been extensively discussed in Chapter 2.

Last but not least, the inward turn of a 'national' imagination as such, whether the word "national" is an accurate word to transmit the underlying intent or not, is potentially associated to the crisis and the anxiety that are unleashed in post-"hangover" Hong Kong at large. For instance, the crisis narratives come to dominate

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[278] Leung Chun-ying indicates the following in his policy address delivered on January 14, 2015: "The 2014 February issue of *Undergrad*, the official magazine of the Hong Kong University Students' Union, featured a cover story entitled 'Hong Kong people deciding their own fate'. In 2013, a book named *Hong Kong Nationalism* was published by *Undergrad*. It advocates that Hong Kong should find a way to self-reliance and self-determination. *Undergrad* and other students, including student leaders of the occupy movement, have misstated some facts. We must stay alert. We also ask political figures with close ties to the leaders of the student movement to advise them against putting forward such fallacies."
Chun-ying Leung, "2015 Policy Address," accessed November 29, 2016, http://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2015/eng/p8.html.
It is important to note that in this address by Leung, the title of the book is mistranslated, thus distorting the actual discussion that took place in the book.

[279] Note the particular use of the term in the context of Hong Kong and mainland China.

[280] "*Minzu Lun* jiayin sanqian ben"《民族論》加印三千本 (Reprinting 3,000 additional copies of *On the Hong Kong National*), *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報, January 15, 2015, accessed October 10, 2016, http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/news/art/20150115/19003401.

again in academic writings. Even though the academic inquiry of connecting 1997 to an impending crisis had long prevailed before and around 1997 (see Chapter 1), an aggrandizing self-representation of Hong Kong, and the aspiration to assimilate China through the injection of modern and democratic ideas can still at times be found in the pre-1997 context.[281] When the appearance of disappearance, as it was mapped out in Chapter 5, becomes a 'new' condition of postmillennial Hong Kong, the idea of crisis finally takes shape not just as a critical moment, but as real threats and dread. Likewise, the abundance of images of death in local cultural expressions is discussed by Chu Yiu-wai when calling for the importance of Hong Kong studies as a method: in one example, the line "this city is dying, you know?" from a locally produced drama *When Heaven Burns* (2011)—which has become viral even among infrequent television viewers—is widely believed to have spoken for a considerable many in the city.[282] Likewise, the motif of death is also discussed by Chu in connection to the circulation of different sayings concerning the "death of Hong Kong cinema," the "death of Cantopop," and the "death of Hong Kong" in different media in the post-1997 era.[283] To this end, Brian Fong attributes the cause to the distressed condition of the city to the disillusionment of previously established beliefs in Hong Kong's future.

According to Fong, one popular view of imagining Hong Kong's future is the discourse of "democratic handover" which was developed in the 1980s. This discourse is built on the hypothesis that China would embrace democratic ideals upon its economic reform, and that Hong Kong would be granted ultimate democracy after the handover. Such a view was, however, completely destroyed on August 31, 2014, when the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China (SCNPC) declared the additional requirement for the constitutional reform plan in Hong Kong: The candidates running for Chief Executive Election must be pre-selected by a nominating committee which is not directly elected by electorates. Although the decision made by Beijing does not pertain any legally binding effect in Hong Kong, the dutiful response of the Hong Kong SAR government to this "8.31 decision"

[281] This is, for instance, what Ip Iam-chong critiques as "northbound colonialism" in the essay "The Specters of Marginality and Hybridity."
[282] Chu, *Hong Kong Studies as a Method*, 11.
[283] Ibid.

declares the death of the discourse of "democratic handover." With the annihilation of the first view, the second view of imagining Hong Kong's future was formed in 2012 and was based on the discourse of "independence and nation-building." Fong groups under this category the advocacy for Hong Kong as a city-state and the pro-independence stance, which project the collapse of the political regime run by the Chinese Communist Party in China (on its own) in the near future.[284] Since the second view remains a myth that is built on an unpredictable future, it does not yield to any concrete outcome or aspiration. With an eye to all these, Fong reinstates the need to develop a "third view" to break the impasse faced by Hong Kong in the post-1997 era.[285] What is noteworthy is that the ideas proposed in the articles compiled in the book—such as the implementation of "dual leadership system," and the emphasis on the "community-centre dimension" as a perspective as well as a praxis—rekindle local participation and relation in the political sphere, without any (re)construction of the national.

Comparing this to what was discussed earlier, the ambiguous line between the national/nation and *minzu*, with the invisible presence of other connotations of the term such as "ethnicity" in between, should not be treated as an equal sign. The inclusion of the largely undefined "national" in the abovementioned book titles can be interpreted as a theoretical (or even psychological) attempt to destabilize the present, monolithic conceptualization of the term, under which concepts like "local" encounter difficulties in its translation and transmission. The attempts to use alternative wordings and to apply these terms unconventionally, on the one hand, highlight the potential presence of a polyphonic site, whether these attempts are justified or not; on the other hand, the oppositions encountered by these voices—for instance, the (mis)understanding projected by the Chinese authority and pro-Beijing voices by adhering only to a rigid, uni-perspectival understanding of the term—reveals the narrowing of a space for Bakhtinian heteroglossia and "dialogization" to take place.[286]

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[284] Despite Fong's naming of the second discourse here, it is noteworthy that Horace Chin Wan, who builds up the discourse of "Hong Kong as a city-state" in a series of books published under the same title, openly stated that he does not advocate for Hong Kong independence. This puts doubt to whether "Hong Kong as a city-state" and the pro-independence stance can be categorised into one discourse.

[285] Fong, *On Reforming Hong Kong*, xiii.

[286] The following description of heteroglossia speaks accurately to the varying conceptions and perceptions of terms such as "local" and "nation/national" that are discussed in the above:

Returning to the Local

Under these circumstances, the increasing difficulties of deciphering what local is have been voiced out by many scholars in recent years. To this end, in this thesis I chose not to pin down what local is, but to examine how it is varyingly conceived and perceived. The above mentioned example of the "national" is revealed to be another equally problematic term like "local," where questions are extended from whether an accurate meaning can be located, to whether a pre-existing connotation ever exists (somehow, whether the term should be applied in the first place). Despite this, the emergence of terms as such, however contested in their connotations, and their applications in scenarios, however unexpected, do reveal countless rhizomatic forces at work that can hardly be fully contained, or adequately explained in one discourse, or on one strata. This is why in this thesis I endeavoured to explore local constellations through concrete things, places, and bodies, and local relations in case-specific, time-sensitive, and place-based examples.

In 1998, Rey Chow has already warned of the potential problems in the unreflective adaptation of loaded terms such as "Chinese" to articulate pre-existing theoretical issues ranging from modernity, modernism, and gender and the fields of literature, cinema, and cultural studies. Chow is critical of the use of "Chinese" and the implication of Chineseness in different academic fields and their discussions, as such essentialist ethnic supplement can be problematic, if not dangerous. According to Chow, the conceptualization of Chinese and the subsequent construction of Chineseness operate through an oscillation between what she calls "the logic of the wound" that is built on "past victimization under Western imperialism" and "sinochauvinism" that builds up a "narcissistic, megalomaniac affirmation of

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> At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, meteorological, physiological-that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions. (428)

While dialogism is considered to be "the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia," the process of "dialogization" delimits the connotation of a word, discourse, language, or culture without prioritizing any singular meaning (426-427). When terms like "local" are regarded as "controversial," this precisely reveals the reluctance to open up and accept any possible dialogues between different utterances, voices, and expressions of the concept, be it in the everyday life, actual debates, or representations.
See, Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, eds. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson, and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas, 1975).

China."[287] The "habitual obsession" with Chineseness is manifested, for instance, in the "compulsion to emphasize the Chinese dimension to all universal questions,"[288] where the sinocentrism resulted is precisely a form of cultural essentialism that builds up and is built up by "an imaginary boundary between China and the rest of the world."[289] Following this, the label "Chinese," often taken for granted as "a homogeneously unified, univocal China" that is bound to mainland China, not only overlooks differences and discards the presence of, for instance, minority populations within China, restive non-Han borderlands such as Tibet and Xinjiang, and others like Taiwan and Hong Kong; it also imposes cultural as well as political hegemony that constructs and implements a monolithic, state-approved identity, and that equates and accumulates to a form of Han-Chinese nationalism and imperialism backing up and operated by the political regime of China.[290] Using language as an example, Chow compares the enforcement of Mandarin as standard "proper" Chinese to the imposition of the English language by the British colonizer in colonial Hong Kong, where the plurality and the polyphony of other voices, other languages, and other opinions are suppressed by the authority.[291] What worries Chow most is that the myth of Chineseness—underlining the imperialistic mode of a Han-Chinese-centrism—is from time to time unfiltered and applied directly on the level of realpolitik as well as in academic fields.

To prevent from siding with any form of Chinese-centrism, Chow sees the need to destabilize the monolithic understanding of Chineseness by pluralizing and problematising the concept. Chineseness, according to Chow, constitutes a myth of origin where the construction of Chinese identity based on the ideals of national unity, ethnic oneness, and even loyalty to a single political regime is highly illusory and manipulative. This arbitrary 'bonding' to Chineseness is therefore a form of violence and can be easily exploited by the political regime to promote propagandist ideology and achieve political goals.[292] With an eye to this, Chow is particularly attentive to the condition of diaspora and henceforth diasporic studies (especially when it is handled

[287] Rey Chow, "Introduction: On Chinese as Theoretical Problem," *Boundary* 2 (Fall 1998), 6.
[288] Ibid., 6.
[289] Ibid., 3, 6.
[290] Ibid., 8.
[291] Ibid., 12.
[292] Ibid., 24.

by "diasporic intellectuals" like Chow herself). After having debunked Chineseness, scholars engaged in postcolonial criticism seek to devise different and sometimes contrasting approaches in dealing with the subject matter.

Despite the same aspiration to challenge Chineseness, Shih Shu-mei, however, disagrees with the take of diasporic studies:

> Two major points of blindness in the study of Chinese diaspora lie in the inability to see beyond Chinese as an organizing principle and the lack of communication with other scholarly paradigms such as ethnic studies in the United States, South East Asian studies, and various language-based postcolonial studies such as Francophone studies.[293]

Despite this, the significance of diasporic studies should not be dismissed entirely, as it has helped Hong Kong cultural studies to establish a perspective in combating against British colonialism and Chinese nationalism.[294] Yet, Shih shu-mei does justly uncover the limitation of diasporic studies and the potentiality of Sinophone studies in further dealing, for instance, with the local. When Shih proclaims an end date to diaspora, she also suggests that "everyone should be given a chance to become local."[295] Shih's statement thereby addresses the potential rise of local consciousness among diasporic subjects and/or their offspring in their 'new' home. In order to get away from these limitations, Shih offers an alternative as the Sinophone studies, which emphasizes on a local perspective that is placed-based and time sensitive in its analytical mode.[296]

Introducing the Sinophone as a new concept into the picture does not necessarily make things simpler, but hopefully more translucent in a sense that a new field is installed with an aim to move away from terms that are overloaded with conflicting connotations and that hinder comprehension and transmission. With a similar difficulty delineated by Chow on the use of "Chineseness," and sharing a

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[293] Shu-mei Shih, *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (California: University of California Press, 2007), 27.
[294] Law, *Collaborative Colonial Power.*
[295] Ibid., 185.
[296] For instance, in her book *Visuality and Identity: Sinophone Articulations across the Pacific* (2007) and the edited volume *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (2013), Sinophone studies are practiced.

similar attention to the local with Shih, I trace the varying conceptions and perceptions of the local in its different expressions as localnesses, which are given a plural form in this thesis, and in different local relations that can be uncovered by the different constellations of localnesses in different things, places, and bodies that pertain materiality within texts and in the physical world. While assigning new names to these pre-existing, highly entangled relations is not necessarily productive to the discussion, the ongoing entanglement of other concepts and other terms like what has been discussed earlier concerning the national apparently makes it equally hard to seek for common grounds in holding a fair and well-comprehended discussion.

Conclusion:
Rethinking Hybridity with Postcolonial Local Relations

In no doubt, hybridity, which has been extensively used in many descriptions of Hong Kong in different fields since the pre-1997 era, is seemingly an easy solution.[297] In different post-1997 scenarios that have been discussed in this thesis, the conceptualizations and perceptions of Hong Kong localnesses are not always compatible with one another, making them hardly a hybrid—not only that they are at times unwilling to co-exist with one next to another, but a number of them are indeed in a volatile state to repel the other. For instance, in the spectatorships and the readerships examined in Chapter 5, their almost irreconcilable (op)positionings against one another seemingly suggest that hybridity is apparently not something to celebrate. It is also owing to this, I refuse insofar to describe localness as something hybrid, but opted for revealing the multiple yet highly entangled appearances of localnesses. Coming to the end of the thesis—precisely in the name of 'hybridity'—I seek to ask whether it is possible to (re)read hybridity in a context where manifold meanings are present but their co-presence are not always respected by one another.

The act of representation, according to Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*, gives rise to "a space of intervention,"[298] which simultaneously involves

[297] Since Hong Kong studies gradually took shape in Hong Kong in the early 1990s, the discussion of Hong Kong cultural identity has become one of the field-shaping topics, where "in-between-ness" and "hybridity" are since then regarded as the key characteristics of Hong Kong culture and identity.
[298] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London; New York: Routledge, 1994), 9.

"invention"—more importantly, the postcolonial engagement is based on the willingness and the ability to recognize multiple locations of culture, hybridized perspectives towards and diverged from culture productions, and different subjectivities in (trans)formation. Hong Kong localnesses, which are varyingly conceived and perceived in response to the local consciousness emerged in post-handover Hong Kong and the oppressive forces it attract, can therefore be understood as Bhabha's subaltern and postcolonial agency where its different appearances, be it partial or complete, interrupt the existing discourse laid down by the colonizer and generate new cultural translation of the colonial past. At the same time, Bhabha also reminds us of the internal cultural differences, and subsequently the expectancy of conflicts and clashes,

> The concept of cultural differences focuses on the problem of ambivalence of cultural authority, the attempt to dominate in the name of cultural supremacy which is itself produced only in the moment of differentiation [...] The enunciative process introduces a split in the performative present of cultural identification; a split between the traditional culturalist demand for a model, a tradition, a community, a stable system of reference, and the necessary negation of the certitude in the articulation of new cultural demands, meanings, strategies in the political present, as a practice of domination, or resistance.[299]

In the post-1997 context of Hong Kong, the major distress towards the formation of a local postcolonial culture does not come from the culture of the colonizer, nor the culture developed during the colonial era—the varying weighings, connectivities, and understandings of Hong Kong's local reveals that the site of resistance lies in the present moment where the new, looming forces try to exert domination, upon the transferral of sovereignty in 1997.

In post-1997 Hong Kong, the authority's obsession with 'newness' can be

[299] Ibid., 34-35.

seen in many aspects that entail how the 'post'-colonial is understood and performed by the official bodies, and how the notion of "hybridity" that has been emphasized in Hong Kong culture and identity experiences 'post'-colonial reconfigurations. The Hong Kong SAR government, for instance, carries out active and extensive measures in restructuring the façade of the city, ranging from the creation of new sites of commemoration (e.g. The Golden Bauhinia Square; Star Avenue) to the demolition of sites with colonial inscriptions (e.g. the Central Star Ferry Pier in 2006 and the Queen's Pier in 2007). Meanwhile, the government's support to the urban renewal plans directly encourages the destruction of older district, and gives rise to social problems such as gentrification, the uneven distribution of resources, and the dismantling of community-based neighbourhoods. As an exemplar to this, all buildings on the entire Lee Tung Street (Wedding card street) were demolished in 2008 to give way to a development project headed by a property developer, where expensive high-rise residential buildings are built; in 2009, Choi Yuen Village also became the bulldozer's target, in order for the construction of the Hong Kong-Macau-Zhuhai Bridge Link to take place. All these plans endorsed by the authority in 'renewing' and 'redeveloping' the city were, however, confronted by different scales and forms of resistance in the society—in addition to mass protests, the concern towards local affairs takes up various forms of appearance in the postmillennial era, ranging from sit-ins, hunger strikes, occupy movements, digital activism, and prostrating walks, to the formation of pressure groups and political parties. The emergence of community-driven social movements and activist campaigns is not only an expression of social discontent that has become conspicuous in the post-"hangover" state of the city; the growth of social activism, civil engagement, and political awareness are also read by many as the rise of local consciousness in postmillennial Hong Kong.[300] Regardless of these voices coming from different communities, most of these so-called "urban renewal plans" of the government are nevertheless carried out by the stakeholders without much actual obstruction. The Central Star Ferry Pier, the Queen's pier, Lee Tung Street, and Choi Yuen Village were thus all removed from the cartography that is connected to the colonial era, to order to give way to a new cityscape that sets forth the 'new' status of post-1997

[300] See Footnote 209 in Chapter 4.

Hong Kong. Exaggerated as it might sound, but even "Hong Kong people" were to be renewed: The notion of a "new Hong Kong person" was proposed by the then-Chief Executive Donald Tsang in his Policy Address in 2007, with a mission to "cultivate new spirits" and cope with "new times";[301] however, exactly on October 9, 2013, even this term once used by Donald Tsang in 2007 was overridden by *People's Daily*, a China-based newspaper owned by the Chinese Communist Party: An article—with a self-explanatory heading "The Development of Hong Kong Needs 'New Hong Kong People'"—was published in the overseas edition of the newspaper, where "new Hong Kong people" are defined as the increasing population of Chinese immigrants settling in Hong Kong, and are shaped by the Beijing authority as an important force as well as a source to gear the future development of Hong Kong.[302] What is exposed is the 'connection' between Hong Kong and China, which, shifting from an implicit, symbolic level to an explicit, visible level, marks the 'new dawn' of the 'post'-colonial era.[303]

According to Bhabha, any postcolonial culture is inevitably characterized by hybridity, since a postcolonial culture is once based on and grows out of the previous colonial culture. In other words, there is no such thing that is genuinely 'native,' or 'original'—hence, the postcolonial's liaison to the so-called "mother"-land or "mother"-culture, if any, should not be naturalized as a direct, continuous cohesion. In light of the problematics of anticolonialism and decolonization, Arik Dirlik aptly criticizes (antocolonial) nationalism—the flipside of these two procedures—as another side of colonialism.[304] In the meantime, hybridization does bring in "the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority" that can unsettle the

[301] Yiu-wai Chu, *Lost in Transition: Hong Kong Culture in the Age of China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), 14.

[302] "Xianggang fazhan xuyao 'xin Xianggangren'" 香港發展需要「新香港人」[The Development of Hong Kong Needs "New Hong Kong People"], *People's Daily* 人民日報, October 9, 2013, accessed October 10, 2016, http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrbhwb/html/2013-10/09/content_1307326.htm.

[303] This controversial statement immediately caught the attention of the media in Hong Kong, and was extensively reported by different news channels the next day. Meanwhile, China's active means of cultural assimilation in Tibet, Xinjiang, and Hong Kong is compared and discussed by Bill Chou. Examples in Hong Kong include the revision of the curricula of history-related subjects (192), different measures to foster state-sanctioned national identity (192), the increasing presence of mainland capital (193), and the trend of cross-border marriages, among others (194).
See, Bill Chou, "New Bottle, Old Wine: China's Governance of Hong Kong in View of Its Policies in the Restive Borderlands," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 44, no. 4 (2016): 177-209.

[304] Arif Dirlik, "Rethinking Colonialism: Globalization, Postcolonialism, And The Nation," *Interventions* 4, no. 3 (2002): 436-437.

colonial discourse.[305] Under this circumstance, if hybridity is to be applied in the context of post-1997 Hong Kong, it bends towards the internal (i.e. the internal cultural differences aforementioned), but not to the external (e.g. with the Beijing-backed HKSAR government as the new authority)—in this aspect, this explains why the acts of imposing the new by erasing the old were met with noises of concern and resistance from certain local communities; however, can the internal social cleavage that emerges in Hong Kong also be summarized by the mere talk of hybridity? Considering the different opinions on Hong Kong's local (see Chapter 5), there are indeed many layers, latent and manifest, in each supportive and unsupportive readerships—echoing to the discussion in Chapter 2, the presence of different localisms, as political manifestations of local in Hong Kong, precisely shows that all these takes, by sharing similarities and differences at the same time, cannot be contained in the conventional mapping of political orientations in terms of left, middle, and right. The dilemma of 'hybridity' hereby arises: A hybridised spectrum exists, but hybridity is not necessarily celebrated automatically as a value. To this end, Ang offers a critical perspective to look at hybridity where hybridity is actually not an easy solution, and it is indeed never a solution:

> Hybridity then is a concept that confronts and problematizes boundaries, although it does not erase them. [...] This tells us that hybridity, the very condition of in-betweenness, can never be a question of simple shaking hands, of happy, harmonious merger and fusion. Hybridity is not the solution, but alerts us to the difficulty of living with differences, their ultimately irreducible resistance to complete dissolution. In other words, hybridity is a heuristic device for analysing complicated entanglement.[306]

When the preservation campaigns for the Central Star Ferry Pier in 2006 and the Queen's Pier in 2007 called for the protection of "Hong Kong people's collective memory," these calls reveal how the colonial past of the local is treated by local

[305] Bhabha, 160.
[306] Ien Ang, "Together-in-difference: Beyond Diaspora, into Hybridity," *Asian Studies Review* 27 2 (2003): 149.

community, and how people in Hong Kong position themselves varyingly in the quasi-postcolonial state of the city—since the two piers are indubitably connected to Hong Kong's colonial past, and British colonial power to different degrees.[307] Therefore, recognizing the piers as important local heritage is, on the one hand, an acknowledgement of the city's past by embracing every constituency of different Hong Kong stories; on the other hand, the reclaiming of a space and a time that were once subject to colonial authority demonstrates the operation of a Hong Kong subjectivity that is capable of redefining and reinterpreting places and the past of the city through local perspectives. By re-appropriating the past with a local consciousness formed in the present, a hybrid postcolonial subject position is revealed, where what used to be considered as 'old' indeed generates a form of newness in itself in ways of seeing Hong Kong and perceiving Hong Kong culture and history. The renewal of the past by means of a postcolonial local consciousness discards the simplistic association of any unreflective decolonization project to the postcolonial, and the binary dichotomy of postcolonial/new and colonial/old, which are, alongside with materialistic social relations, the basis of the (neo)liberal modernist framework that continues to run regardless of the colonial-postcolonial transition. According to Hui Po-keung and Lau Kin-chi, the so-called "neoliberalism" is neither "new," nor "liberal," as it is viewed by them as a

> cultural project aimed at translating and reducing social values to concerns for material gains, or downgrading human beings into docile animals.[308]

By reinstating agencies to things, places, and bodies, by looking at their cultural movements out of the scope where '(neo)liberalism' reigns, the analyses undertaken in this thesis precisely comes to uncover hidden relations, and reconnect visible relations in connection to Hong Kong and its locals.

With an eye to all these, the co-presence of hybrid forms and identities without causing as much apparent conflicts before 1997 and during the post-1997 hangover period of Hong Kong, and, on the contrary, the reverse happenings in post-

[307] Queen's Pier, built in 1925 and relocated in 1954, used to be the landing pier for the British Royal family and colonial governors, where official ceremonies were held to demonstrate the authority of Britain over Hong Kong.
[308] Po-keung Hui, and Lau, Kin-chi, "'Living in Truth' vs *Realpolitik*: Limitations and Potentials of the Umbrella Movement," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 16, 3 (2015): 361.

handover Hong Kong reveal the presence of different boundaries and their operations in Hong Kong. In the case of Sung Wong Toi at the turn of the 20th century, the mobility of the émigré-literati between mainland China, colonial Hong Kong, and Macau gives a general impression of few or weak boundaries at work. Meanwhile, deterritorialization seemingly took place with ease through their attachment to Sung Wong Toi, past personal experience (presumably in mainland China), and the highly imaginary imperial China. On the one hand, Hong Kong was treated, at least by them, as a 'boundless' territory, where little attention was paid to the presence of boundary; on the other hand, this impression does not necessarily imply that the territory is unbounded, or lacking—quite on the contrary, this can also mean little resistance against the drawing of boundaries, where highly entangled boundaries are indeed involved. Therefore, deterritorialization, instead of just erasing boundaries, works hand in hand with reterritorialization, where new boundaries are constantly created and certain pre-existing boundaries are potentially multiplied. At times translocal, at times transnational, traces of local are still expressed in the local context, and this is the case of Lion Rock and its cultural reverberations and circulations. From the spectatorships of *Ten Years*, which are examined in Chapter 5, boundaries in postmillennial Hong Kong are apparently not as flexible and welcoming as they are in previous times and cases—yet it is precisely at these visible borders that hybridity can no longer function as a casual, or even (once) trendy description, but its presence and operation are attested by different forces and voices that are unequally distributed and heard on different levels and of different degrees of connectivity.

The fact that the "indigenous inhabitants"[309] of Hong Kong are never understood as Hong Kong "natives," even to those who are considered to be "nativist

[309] "Indigenous inhabitants" 原居民 refer to descendants whose families were installed in the New Territories of Hong Kong before the "Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory" was signed between the Qing government and the British Empire in 1898.

localists,"[310] underscores how 'Hong Kong,' without an origin, is indeed constructed by a rhizomatic network of relations—constantly in flux—between different things, places, bodies across different generations and time-spaces. Therefore, for the rest of the 'non-indigenous' people to make connections to "Hong Kong," things, places, and bodies in texts and in reality are indispensable for them to have interaction with and hence construct their own local relations with "Hong Kong" and their identities in a spectrum that is filled with buzzwords like "Chinese," "Hong Kong Chinesese," "Hongkonger," and others. To this end, the presence of these things, places, and bodies, be it in representations, events, social phenomena, legal documents, or the natural environment, is testimony to the operation, circulation, transformation, and realization of different, otherwise, unimaginable relations and invisible boundaries that constitute different 'Hong Kongs.' It is demonstrated in this thesis that the colonial-postcolonial transition is not an absolute watershed that separates Hong Kong's colonialities from its postcolonialities. To answer the call in the field of cultural studies, sociology, and political science for a postcolonial mind-set, the turn to things, places, and bodies, and the look at local relations through the awareness of localnesses is revealed to be an option that forgoes a (neo)liberal modernist orientation but without submitting unreflectively to any national(ist) discourses. The malleable materiality—now revealed in agencies and the politics of representation and remediation—precisely presents the need to actually face and deal with hybridity, however painstaking it is, on the level of the everyday life in the ongoing process of *postcolonialization*.

[310] The political organization "Hong Kong Indigenous," despite their radical take, defines "Hong Kong people" not by birth origin, but by one's willingness to identify with Hong Kong's local values. On the contrary, Heung Yee Kuk, as a statutory advisory body created since 1926 through which these 'indigenous' inhabitants are represented, is a main source of pro-establishment, pro-Beijing power in post-1997 Hong Kong, due to their interests, their extensive land ownership in the New Territories through the government's endorsement. It is according to the Article 40 of the Hong Kong Basic Law that "[t]he lawful traditional rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants of the 'New Territories' shall be protected by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region." These traditions include the concessionary right enjoyed by every male descendant to build their own "*ting uk*" 丁屋, which is a name given to those houses that are built from the concessionary right.
See, Elson Tong, "The Edward Leung question: How does a mainland immigrant become a HK localist?" *Hong Kong Free Press*, July 31, 2016, accessed October 10, 2016, https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/07/31/edward-leung-question-mainland-immigrant-become-hk-localist/.

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